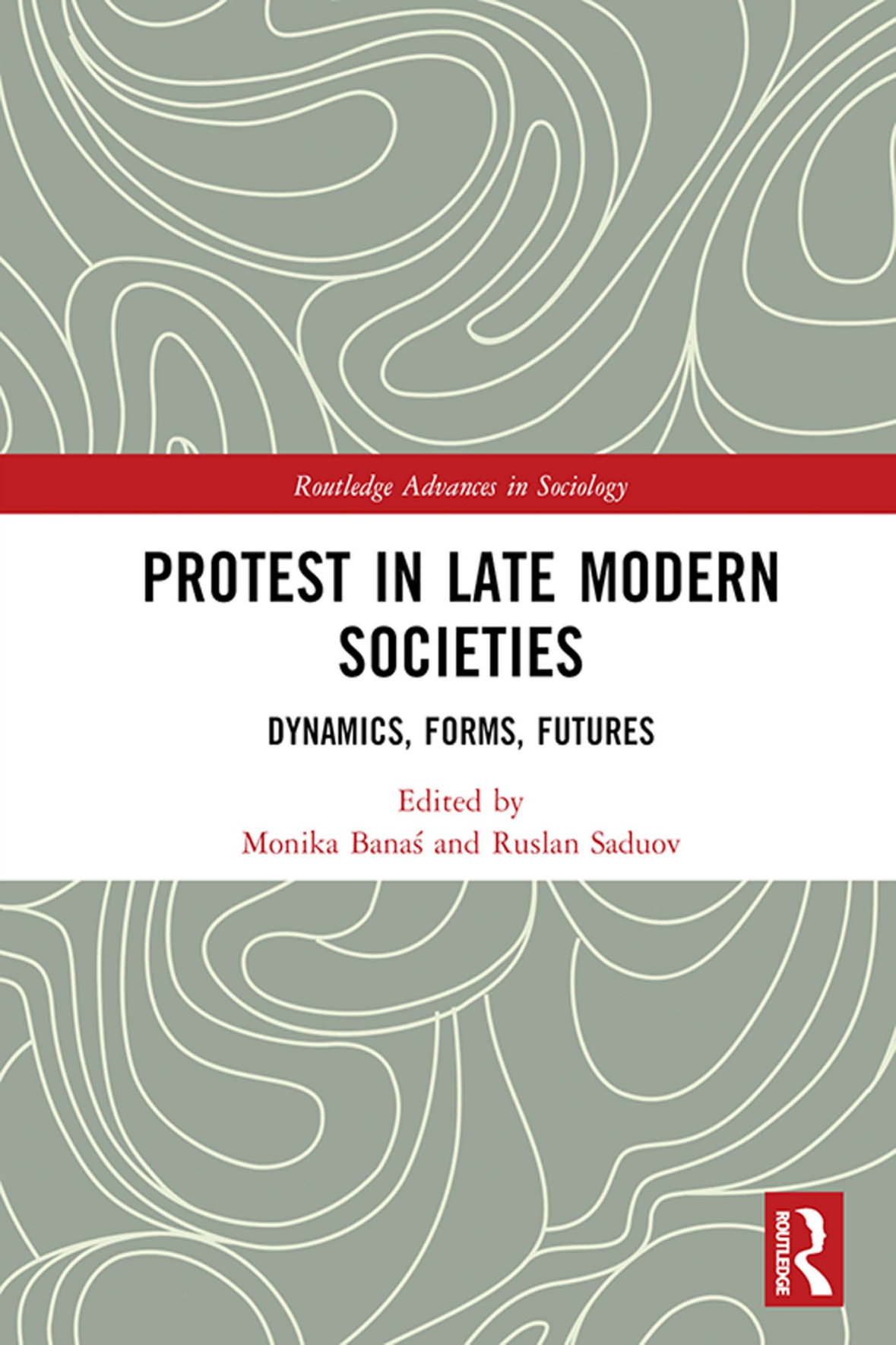
Routledge Advances in Sociology
PROTEST IN LATE MODERN SOCIETIES
DYNAMICS, FORMS, FUTURES
Edited by
Monika Banaś and Ruslan Saduov
ROUTLEDGE

Protest in Late Modern Societies

This book discusses a broadly understood phenomenon of protest from several perspectives, including historical, cultural, social, political, environmental and semiotic. Through their analyses, the authors undertake to envision the possible evolution of the forms of contestation in the further decades of the 21st century, taking into account the specificity of the globalisation processes.

A multidimensional approach offered in this volume makes it possible to capture and identify new features of contemporary contestation and those that seem unchanged despite the passage of time and altering audiences. Examples from Europe (France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Ireland, Malta, Bulgaria, Poland, Belarus, Russia), America (the United States, Mexico, Chile) and Far East (Hong Kong and China) are relevant case studies that show the faces of contestation while reaching for new or modified rhetoric, symbolism, communication channels and the so-called modus operandi of protest initiators, active and passive participants and short- and long-distant observers.

The book will be of value to a wide audience, particularly to the researchers studying contestation, social resistance, individual and collective disobedience, crisis management and cultural/social dynamic of protests. It will also be of interest to experts and individuals from outside the academia like civil activists, practitioners and NGOs compelled by contemporary processes (tensions) occurring between the state, power, society and individuals.

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Protest in Late Modern Societies

Dynamics, Forms, Futures

Edited by Monika Banaś
and Ruslan Saduov

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Abbreviations

Agroecological Park of Zapopan (APZ)
American Indian Movement (AIM)
Black Lives Matter (BLM)
Colectivo Ciudadano Pro Bosque Pedagógico del Agua (CCPROBPA)
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
Global Climate Strikes (GCSs)
Organisation of American States (OAS)
Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (PCSC Bill)
Poor People's Campaign (PPC)
Serious Violence Reduction Order (SVRO)
United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC/CEPAL)
Water Pedagogical Forest (WPF)
World Trade Organization (WTO)

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Introduction

Monika Banaś and Ruslan Saduov

In discussing protest, we feel compelled to go back to its roots, for it is the roots of protest that nurture our understanding of the current state of affairs.

Originating in Latin, the verb *prōtestārī* means to witness, to declare, to testify publicly in front (*prō*) of a collective body or entity (*testārī*, call to witness, be a witness or make a will). The word entered Middle English in the 15th century from the Anglo-French and, with time, broadened its referent group, incorporating nouns such as objection, affirmation or assertion (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

The contemporary use of the term refers primarily to states confronting two or more opposing parties/agents/actors. Participants in a dispute arising from divergent positions declare their disagreement with solutions already in place or proposals made by their opponents. They do so for various reasons: ideological, political, economic, cultural, religious, moral or ethical. Remaining with the simplistic arrangement of two opposing sides, each of them, while defending their inclusively conceived interests, will seek to give them credibility and legitimacy and thus the status of truthfulness understood more broadly than authenticity. Both *authenticity* and *veracity* of protest offer exciting areas for analysis to understand individual and collective actions. While the *authenticity* of protest can be understood as the expression of the participants' beliefs, *veracity* implies more complex issues concerning the extent to which the organisers and participants recognise their protest action serving to expose and acknowledge the true state of affairs. This raises an indirect question about truth regarding what it is and how it can be accessed, considering the multiplicity of views, discourses and narratives.

The dialectical method as a vehicle to discover the truth has been one of the most dominant concepts in philosophical thought since the time of the ancient Greeks. Not just Western but also Eastern thinkers, of course, resorted to similar concepts, yin and yang being one of the best-known examples. Over time, the original meaning of dialectic as a discourse between individuals gave way to more complex theories, such as Hegelianism or Marxian dialectical materialism.

The most satisfactory proof that dialectic is a critical developmental mechanism is the existence of serious criticism of dialectic thought. Karl Popper (1962), among others, repeatedly warned against the dialectic method as it encourages scholars to "to put up with contradictions" (p. 316). Moreover, Mario Bunge

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(1981) considered Hegel's and Marx's dialectic teachings unscientific. However, such vigorous refutations of dialectic seem to further solidify the fundamental character of the dialectic method as a driver of philosophical and, more importantly, societal development.

Dialectic has influenced protest thinking also. One example relevant to this book's theme is Henry Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* in which the American writer justifies opposing laws if they are unjust:

> Unjust laws exist; shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?
>
> (Thoreau, 1849, p. 3)

In supporting transgression, Thoreau promotes relatively active involvement in governmental policies. His essay influenced key figures in civil contestation movements, including Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who, in turn, inspired thousands of thinkers and agents in protests around the world.

Like many of those admiring Gandhi and King, scholars tend to be compelled by the phenomenon of contestation and zealously engage with each other in investigating its various aspects. Since the 1960s, protest research has once again gradually become a central theme in scholarly research with a new perspective on *how* (not *why*) mass mobilisation occurs (Barrie, 2021, p. 4). With many recent contestations and movements, protest remains on the agenda, a phenomenon which is reflected in the realm of literature of disciplines such as political science, sociology (including political sociology), social anthropology and, to a lesser extent, economics, history and cultural studies (D'Anieri et al., 1990; Udayagiri, 1999; Jasper, 2014; Paret et al., 2017; Buzalka, 2021; Barrie, 2021; Giugni and Grasso, 2022).

Meanwhile, a protest gathering many participants, transforming them into a temporarily united crowd, still has no complete research methodology with a proper nomenclature and analytical approach by which to be examined. The lack of methodology results from the variety of contestation aspects reflected in significant trends of the 20th century, such as crowd psychology (Le Bon, 2014); the revolutionary potential of everyday life (Lefebvre, 1947); protest actions seen through the lens of ordinary participants, that is, "history from below" (Krantz, 1988) or historical sociology presenting quantitative research of collective actions challenging the status quo (Tilly, 2004) among others.

Moreover, a complete set of research tools and methods to theorise protest in its mass dimension does not seem possible, as each attempt to do so will be based on specific events that are always individually unique due to factors such as the time, circumstances, place, participants and culture within which the protest occurred. Seemingly identical events will differ precisely because of this "discrete" specificity, escaping the "thick description" reserved for qualitative research on primarily a micro-scale (Geertz, 1973).[1]

It seems, therefore, that contestation, especially in its mass guise, has been, is and will continue to be an object of extensive explanations and a field of the "battle of interpretation" (Gailus, 2001). However, isn't every entity and phenomenon we observe subject to human interpretation? Probably, this is so. We may agree, therefore, with some interpretations that marginalise or reject others, which is determined, as Ludwig Fleck noted, by belonging to the same or similar "thought collective," united by the same or similar "thought style" (Fleck, 1935/1979; Kuhn, 1962). From this perspective, protest in its historical and contemporary interpretations is subject to a similar mechanism, with repercussions for (the understanding and realisation of) future forms of social rebellion and disobedience.

As a consequence of numerous interpretations, scholars have managed to propose a host of contestation theories. However, as summarising existing viewpoints on protest would be both burdensome and impractical, we aim to offer several approaches in this publication that may contribute to broadening the existing theoretical frameworks. The following is the account of the major analytical assumptions underlying this book and references to corresponding chapters.

Performance and protest

A prominent part of the literature on protest seems to be dominated by themes of its impact on the political agenda (national and international), public opinion, elite decision-making, the awakening of political awareness and activism, individual and collective identity formation as well as restoring or implementing a new sociopolitical and cultural order (Barrie, 2021). However, such oriented perspectives do not sufficiently account for the critical feature of protest, namely its form.

Meanwhile, when discussing the reasons for the success or failure, the long-term or short-term impact of protest actions, the formal performative aspect of contestation should be included in this consideration, that is, through what procedures, actions, rhetoric, sounds, scents,[2] symbols and spaces, protest achieves (or does not achieve) the intended goal (not) becoming only an ephemeral action, remembered by just a few, most often those participating in it. These aspects are discussed in two chapters. "Turpism and the anti-aestheticism of political struggle for Sami rights in Norway" by Mariola Pawełko lays a heavy emphasis on the form of protest – the case of Sami performance as a manifestation of their contestation. By describing the acts of performance, the author offers room for discussing its potential to change political decisions and safeguard Sami economic independence. In this respect, Pawełko's approach combines the fields of performance studies and political science. A somewhat different kind of performance is presented in María Paula Malinowski Rubio's "Women's social movement to end violence against women: the case of Chile." The protest opposing violence against women in Chile took the form of a performance. Unlike the Sami example, where a professional artist produced the performance, the Chilean protest was organised by amateur performers and became symbolic worldwide. The author describes the

performance and explains how the success of the protest depended on what kind of means were used, how they were combined as well as the timeline involved.

Values, attitudes and protest

The driving force behind contestation forming its ranks and activating its participants is the values manifested in the attitudes of those involved (Grasso and Giugni, 2019; Monroe et al., 2020; Akkus et al., 2020). Such values are not only political but also broadly understood values that form the basis for world views, interpersonal relations or the institutional relations derived from them. The concept of community, individualism versus collectivism, the individual good versus the common good, the concept of continuity, long-term or short-term orientation, as well as a sense of belonging and agency as subjectively and objectively perceived are just a few aspects determined by the values practised by a given social group or society.

As pillars of the basis of culture, values have a decisive influence on the behaviour of members of a community (Li Donni et al., 2021). For example, the unequal interest of individuals and the related participation (or the lack thereof) in the active shaping of a sociopolitical space may be due to different understandings of the community interest, perceived as a priority or secondary good or in extreme cases, one that may be ignored. These different understandings are reflected in prevailing preferences for forms of governance, namely (1) participatory, resulting in the active participation of citizens in political life combined with a high level of awareness regarding civil rights; (2) indifferent, when participants accept as natural a hierarchical structure of power, which results in one remaining a passive actor with limited involvement in public/community life and (3) the total renunciation of power into the hands of a decision-maker (Almond and Verba, 1963).

Several chapters in this book address the role of values in contestations. Fabien Tarrit in "1917 Russian revolutions: success, collapse and today's consequences" tracks the history of the Russian revolution from its inception to the period following collapse of the USSR. The author considers the revolution as embodying socialist values and as a gateway to the idea of class struggle. Therefore, he attempts to describe the trajectory of socialist values from how they permeated Soviet society to how they decayed after the USSR's dissolution while leaving traces in other countries.

Like Tarrit, István Benczes and István Kollai in "Crisis of capitalism and its effect on voters' attitudes in the Western world" consider ideologies of contestation. They provide an in-depth analysis of two contestations in Ireland and France and convincingly claim that contemporary protests cannot be easily associated with liberal or conservative values.

Desislava Damyanova in "The dynamics of the 2020–2021 protests in Bulgaria" suggests that values can ignite protest. She presents the 2020–2021 protests in Bulgaria as the rise of the people with new democratic values against the ruling

power stuck in outdated dogmas. The author traces the formation of the new generation values to protests in the 1990s, whereby the parents of the 2020 protesters attempted to forge a better future.

In Małgorzata Kułakowska's "'Kill the Bill' protests in British politics," contestation is firmly grounded on democratic values. This chapter describes the popular opposition to a bill that hands over excessive power and authority to the police. The contestation is organised around the idea that the bill attacks the democratic right of the people to protest peacefully and even endangers certain parts of the population, such as the Roma or the Travellers.

Symbols and protest

Symbols make a compelling topic for the representatives of different disciplines. Philosophers have made satisfactory attempts to give meaning to symbols, with Cassirer's three volumes of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* being one of the most widely cited examples. Although semioticians also find symbols significant for analysis (see, e.g., Eco, 1976; Lotman, 2019), social and political scientists, linguists, psychologists and experts in several other fields resort to analysing symbols quite frequently.

Protest symbols provide one with a rich source material to work with. Protesters make use of symbols rather extensively, and such symbols can become eloquent utterances. The symbolism of protest usually does not exist independently. According to Mary Douglas (2004), "a symbol only has meaning from its relation to other symbols in a pattern" (p. xxxii), and it is this fact which makes exploring a symbol tempting.

In this book, two chapters emphasise protest symbols. In "Women's 'Black Protest' in Poland: symbolism and performance as *(un)effective* negotiation in political discourse" by Monika Banaś, the symbols of the Black Protest in Poland against trampling on women's rights are analysed in terms of their impact and meanings. The author shows how the symbols referred to other protests and similar symbols, how the primary meaning of the symbols used in the protest underwent modification and how this affected the general audience in Poland. The conclusion was drawn that modification or even humble travesty of symbols may be counterproductive by not achieving the set goal.

Next, "Chinese media coverage of Hong Kong's anti-government protests in the context of Chinese nationalism" by Joanna Wardęga describes how symbols and symbolic actions can become instrumental in oppressing society. To resist such oppression, protesters can destroy symbols to demonstrate their indignation at infringing their rights and freedoms.

Space and protest

A protest may also appear as a specific space in which the desires and intentions of individuals unite, turning into a collective action or a series of them.

People connected by a community of interests (even if temporary) communicate their will in an easily discernible way: they demonstrate, occupy places, shout, take to the streets carrying banners with demands and slogans, and so on. Thus, they make their physical presence felt in a way they do not normally do. They publicise and visualise their presence; they want to be noticed (sometimes more than in regard to their demands), marking their "space of appearance" (Arendt, 1998, p. 198). This is a particular dimension that connects social bonds with social power showing society its potential. The space of appearance is created during action-oriented assemblies.

Ignazia Bartholini in "The wind of protest goes . . . and then returns: feminist movements in Italy from the 1970s to the 2020s" shows how Italian feminist movements have occupied a larger space in the legislative field by making the authorities introduce amendments to family law that had previously tolerated different kinds of abuse against women.

Contesters occupy even more expansive space in George Cassar's "People power: dissent and reaction in 20th-century colonial Malta." The author narrates the history of the Maltese people as a succession of resistance and protest acts whereby the contesters occupied increasingly more space ending up as a people claiming their territory and identity as an independent nation.

However, winning space is not necessarily an easy task for a progressive protest. Mike Kohout in "From the Poor People's Campaign to the Poor People's Campaign: fifty years of protest in the United States" explains why the Poor People's Campaign inaugurated by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. decades ago has not been very successful in the American context, with not much space having been won so far.

Finally, "Model of inclusive civil socio-ecological culture as a novel form of protest: the case of the Water Pedagogical Forest" by José G. Vargas-Hernández presents an unusual form of bottom-up protest, whereby residents occupy vacant urban land to create spaces for teaching and learning and, importantly, to protect such spaces from commercialisation and natural decay.

Rhetoric and protest

Collective action is impossible without a speech act and, ultimately, a dialogue, leading to agreement on a common goal and its realisation. This agreement, in turn, is possible through communicative acts understood by all participants (Habermas, 1998; Austin, 1975). The protest rhetoric is, therefore, relevant.

Although rhetoricians have paid increasing attention to protests since the 1960s, when protests rocked Western countries, scholars did not embrace such research at once. Many of them frowned at the perspective of studying protest language at all. Edward Corbett's (1974) essay was indicative in this respect. The author questioned if the rhetoric of protest existed because this rhetoric was a "babbling tongue, a chanting tongue, a cursing tongue, not a tongue eloquently uttering a composed discourse" (p. 4), and a composed discourse was what rhetoricians had

been used to. Corbett insisted that protesters refused to reason but referred to emotions at best and pointed at the "prevalence of emotional, inflammatory, abrasive, coercive force in the rhetoric of confrontation" (Ibid.). At the end of his essay, Corbett could not answer the question whether protest rhetoric actually existed. However, an eloquent response to his question came with the rise of protest rhetoric research in subsequent years when the "babbling tongue" (Ibid.) of protest turned out to be a subject too tempting to avoid.

Moreover, following in the wake of Marshall McLuhan's research, scholars consider visual communication part of protest rhetoric. For instance, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites (2001), along with Christine Harold and Kevin DeLuca (2005), have investigated the role of photographs in protest discourse. On top of this, researchers have, in recent years, addressed digital media as an effective means of enhancing protest. The example of the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrated the rhetorical potential of digital technologies (Woods and McVey, 2016). Therefore, a contemporary protest rhetoric study has to take into account this kind of mediation.

In line with the latest scholarship on protest rhetoric, two chapters in this book analyse protests taking due account of the digital technologies that facilitate them. "Semantic opposition of US versus THEM in late 2020 Russian-language Belarusian discourse: synchronic and diachronic aspects" by Antonina Matsiunova focuses on archetypical notions of the Belarusian nation and tracks the development of these notions until this day. The author explains how these notions have degraded and become the tools to divide the nation, leading to societal split and protest.

The chapter, "With the intention to be subjective: the rhetoric of contemporary liberal media in Russia" by Ruslan Saduov analyses the rhetoric of the Russian oppositional media outlets on Telegram, a popular messenger platform. The author suggests that the media resort to several strategies, including those typically avoided by journalists, namely employing vagueness and deliberate subjectivity.

Aftermath

Taking the above into account, we may conclude that protests provide a space for the emergence of a new political force, one unformed in an institutional framework, which, nevertheless, has the potential to realise and reinvent the existing political order (Jonsson, 2021).

In contemporary democracies (and perhaps beyond), protest, especially in its non-violent forms, may prove to be an effective way of eliminating the dysfunctional mechanisms that have led to the crisis of political trust which can be observed in the first decades of the 21st century.

The examples of protests included in this book show how dynamic and complex the phenomenon is, one made up of and co-created by values, interpretations, actions, spaces, appearances, agents and performances. Apart from these, this edited volume discusses protest from several perspectives, namely historical,

cultural, social, political, linguistic and performative. Such a multidimensional approach makes it possible, we believe, to capture and identify new features of contemporary contestation and those that seem unchanged despite the passage of time and altering audiences.

Examples from Europe (France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Ireland, Malta, Bulgaria, Poland, Belarus, Russia), America (the United States, Mexico, Chile) and the Far East (Hong Kong, China) constitute relevant case studies that show the faces of contestation while reaching for new or modified rhetoric, symbolism, communication channels and the so-called modus operandi of protest initiators, active and passive participants, as well as short- and long-distant observers. Through their analysis of these phenomena, the authors envision the possible evolution of the forms of contestation in the future decades of the 21st century, taking into account the specific nature of globalisation processes.

With this book, we, therefore, hope to contribute to the ongoing debate of contestation by adding multiple perspectives united around the phenomenon in question, one which may become one of the major factors shaping future societies (*societies of protest*).

Notes

1 Nevertheless, attempts to develop a universal methodology and tools for the study of protest have been made since the 1980s: PEA (Protest Events Analysis) captures the phenomenon as a multidimensional, multifaceted and multi-spatial process and not just a state determined by structural factors; see, for example, (Lorenzini et al., 2022; Ortiz et al., 2022).
2 For example, "Scent of terror" created in protest against Moscow perfume store. www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-51647596 (accessed: 2022–09–09).

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Chapter 1

1917 Russian revolutions

Success, collapse and today's consequences

Fabien Tarrit

Introduction

If we follow Eric Hobsbawn in *The Age of Extremes* (1994), the "short twentieth century" started in 1917 with the Russian revolution, and it ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In other words, it began with a revolution, and it ended with the definitive failure of the same revolution. It would not be a lie to claim that the revolution in Russia was among the very few successful revolutions in history and that it was intended first as the start of a world socialist revolution. To be more specific, Russia was the site of two revolutions in 1917, and we propose to discuss this episode from a historical perspective informed by a Marxist point of view. Thus, the chapter is not only based on an interest in past events, but it also aims to offer a contribution to the revival of the revolutionary idea, including the idea of communism.[1] However, this is not any revolution since it was the first alternative to capitalism that existed for quite an extended period, at least in Europe. Russia was much less developed, the weak link of capitalist Europe, where serfdom was abolished only in 1861. Moreover, if the revolution was an objective blow against emerging capitalism, the subjectivity of the revolutionary masses was mixed feelings, including an aversion towards czarism, especially by some communities.

However, the mainstream analysis of that period sees communism as essentially totalitarian and criminal, the revolution being only the takeover by some unscrupulous minority, despite the powerful revolutionary wave in Europe from 1917 to 1923, including the emancipatory momentum of the Russian revolution. Thirty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and 20 years after 9/11, we easily can claim that the current tragic events all over the world make sure that Fukuyama (1992) was wrong when he was advancing that history has no alternative except capitalism. By contrast, we agree with the statement that "the similarities to the world that produced the Russian revolution are too close for comfort" (Wooldridge, 2016). While the Romanovs' absolute monarchy appeared to be, throughout the 19th century, the spearhead of conservatism in Europe, Marx and Engels started to build relationships with Russian revolutionaries as early as 1867.

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In 1871, they took part in the Paris Commune with Elizaveta Dmitrieva.[2] Marx learnt the Russian language, and in 1881, he considered the idea that Russia could achieve socialism, without going through capitalism, in cooperation with the revolution in Western Europe.

> If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development.
>
> (Marx, 1882)

As soon as 1914, Lenin did not see the coming revolution only as a democratic revolution in a backward country on the margins of the general world history. On the contrary, it was to be understood within the perspective of the world socialist revolution that the Romanov Empire was the weakest link among the great European powers that launched the war. Nevertheless, as imperialism, it harboured modern capitalist firms, which oppressed all national minorities. The development of the Russian working class was the outcome of the development of international capitalism, which rapidly concentrated in a couple of industrial centres.

While the war was extending in space (to Italy, Russia, the United States and other places) and unexpectedly in time, part of the anti-war resistance within the working class in neutral countries, and even in some countries in war, was reviving. The first international socialist conference took place in Zimmerwald in 1915 and another one in Kienthal in 1916, in Switzerland. However, most of the Zimmerwald movement remained pacifist and agreed to compromise with the social democrats who went to war. Radek (Poland's Roslamowcy SDKP, Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland), Lenin and Zinoviev (Russia's Bolshevik RSDLP, Russian Social Democratic Labour Party) led the "Zimmerwald Left," which aimed to prepare the socialist revolution with a view to ending the war and to building a revolutionary workers' international. Such was the situation before the revolution started. Therefore, after depicting in the first part the critical moments of the revolutionary period between February and October 1917, including the first measures of the new government, this contribution insists in the second part on the collapse of the Soviet Union and its consequences on ideology and class struggle in the 21st century in favour of capitalism.

The Russian revolutions

This first section is devoted to discussing the 1917 revolutions in Russia. In stressing successively how the workers overthrew czarism and dual power was implemented, we analyse the development from February to October and then the insurgency, and we focus on the first measures.

On January 9, 1917,[3] the anniversary date of the start of the 1905 revolution, demonstrations and strikes were going on, while at the same time, the czarist

regime was getting increasingly rotten. Some sections of the bourgeoisie, and even the aristocracy, intended to contain the political crisis by trying to set a palace coup with the murder of Rasputin. On the other hand, the Russian bourgeoisie had to react to the growing workers' fighting spirit. On February 18, the management of the weapons firm Putilov decided to close one of its biggest units in Petrograd[4] without paying wages (lockout). In reaction, the unrest went on almost continuously. On February 23,[5] demonstrations were planned for the Women's International Day of Struggle against the war, but the leadership of the Bolshevik Party in Petrograd considered that calling for strike action was not appropriate.

> [T]he February revolution was begun from below . . . the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat -the women textile workers.
>
> (Trotsky, 1930, p. 75)

Two days later, the general strike brought Petrograd to a standstill and extended to Moscow. The police and the army fired on the demonstrators on February 26. However, while in 1905, the army had obeyed the officers and opened fire on the protestors, now the detachment of soldiers gradually joined the population. At once, the country that was probably the most backward, became seemingly the most democratic in political terms. Thousands of political prisoners were released, all kinds of the press were openly published, the workers got organised in firms and neighbourhoods, the police disappeared from Moscow, and the army fraternised with the workers.

On February 27, some deputies tried to save the private property with the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. However, the Petrograd Soviet was created the same day by the organisations that defended socialism, led by the Menshevik RSDLP and the RSP (Socialist Revolutionaries). The day after, they formed a "provisional government" led by Prince Lvov as a consensus option; it was the lowest common denominator for all actors. It included the monarchist Octobrist Party, the liberal Kadets and the Trudoviks (a right-wing split from the RSP).

Such events, culminating with the victory of the February uprising, were due to the combination of the workers' movement (strikes, demonstrations) with the peasants' movement via the support and participation of soldiers in the uprising. The debate significantly developed in the RDSLP between two fractions, which amounted to discussing the opportunity of another revolution, and it appeared that the Bolsheviks became more and more popular among the masses. In 1914, they had a majority position within the working class in big cities before the Mensheviks. In small cities in 1917, the split between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks was not complete. In the countryside, where most people lived, the RSP was the most known organisation. The inexperienced strata (new workers, peasants in uniform, workers in small cities, peasants) had trouble differentiating the three "socialist parties." If the rank and file and the

leaders of the Bolshevik RSDLP played a central role during the February days, the party was still a minority within the masses and even in the reviving soviets. Lenin, still in exile, was rather in keeping with the clandestine leadership in Russia (Shliapnikov, Molotov and Zalutsky). More than ever, he defended the armament of the people, which was already included in the 1903 RSDLP minimal programme:

> [T]he only guarantee of freedom and of the complete destruction of tsarism lies in arming the proletariat, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance and power of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. All the rest is mere phrase-mongering and lies, self-deception on the part of the politicians of the liberal and radical camp, fraudulent trickery.
>
> (Lenin, 1917a)

He opposed any support to the provisional government.

> *The proletariat cannot and must not support a war government, a restoration government* . . . it is necessary . . . to *organise*, expand and strengthen a *proletarian* militia, to arm the people under the leadership of the workers.
>
> (Ibid.; stress in the original)

The problems associated with the Russian revolution cannot be separated from international issues. The situation in which the Soviets reappeared was such that the Russian bourgeoisie, first with and then without the czar, waged the World War besides the French and the English states. Then the counter-revolutionary alliance between the czarism and the bourgeoisie was formed with the approval of the "sacred union." The first act of this alliance was to give people's power to the Russian bourgeoisie. Such was the February paradox.

Nevertheless, under the workers' pressure, the Petrograd soviet started acting as a government. On March 1, it issued its first decree (*Prikaz* n° 1) on the army, which claimed that, from then on, the movements of the troops, as well as the soldiers' situation, depended on the soviet. This created tension between the masses' aspirations – as expressed in the February uprising – on the one hand and the outcome of the political orientation of the two parties, which implemented a bourgeois government in their name, on the other hand. Two antagonistic nuclei of a state, which correspond to different classes, were facing each other. Such a duality of power could be only provisional.

August 1917, the Bolshevik Party wins the majority in Petrograd's soviet

Since the situation turned in favour of the proletariat and since the dual power organs were regenerated, the Bolshevik Party proposed a compromise with the Menshevik Party and with the SRP. The Bolsheviks had the majority in the first

All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and they still ruled the "Central Executive Committee of the Soviets."

> The compromise would amount to the following: the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government . . ., would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition . . . would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly . . . The Mensheviks and S.R.s . . . would then agree . . . to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the "new" condition. I think the Bolsheviks would advance no other conditions.
>
> (Lenin, 1917b, p. 312)

It would then be a compromise between the central and local powers without dropping the objective of having the power given to the Soviets. Reed (1919) comments:

> All Russia was learning to read, and reading – politics, economics, history – because the people wanted to *know* . . . Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organisations, and poured into the armies, the villages, the factories, the streets . . . Meetings in the trenches at the Front, in village squares, factories.
>
> (p. 36; stress in the original)

Thanks to such a democracy in Russia, which seemed far superior to the Western parliamentarism (without mentioning censorship and repression in other countries), the Soviets in urban centres gradually turned in favour of the Bolsheviks. On August 31, for the first time, the Petrograd Soviet voted a resolution for all the power to the Soviets. The following week, the Soviets in Moscow, Kyiv and the main agglomerations followed. On September 9, the Soviet Petrograd condemned the coalition of the SRP and the Menshevik Party with the CDP (Constitutional Democratic Party). On September 23, the Petrograd Soviet elected Trotsky as its president. He then joined the Bolshevik Party with all his organisation. Lenin, who was clandestine since July, thought the time came to finish with the former state bureaucracy.

> "Power to the Soviets" means radically reshaping the entire old state apparatus, that bureaucratic apparatus which hampers everything democratic. It means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new, popular one . . . – the workers, soldiers and peasants. It means allowing the majority of the people initiative and independence.
>
> (Lenin, 1917c, p. 372)

The peasants suffered conscription, economic crises and shortages. Besides the urban recovery of soldiers' and workers' fights, now the poor peasants struggled against the big landowners. The CDP–SRP–Menshevik government suspended the land question before the election of the Constituent Assembly, and it sent Cossacks to restore the order as a way to defend private ownership. As soon as July, more and more lands and farms were taken over by small peasants. The working peasantry shared the land for a living. Only the Bolshevik Party supported the movement. Thanks to the radical demands for peace and land sharing, the peasants from villages and the forefront gradually supported the working class.

October 1917 – the insurgency and power to the soviets

Lenin and others wrote theses for the Conference of the Bolshevik Party in Petrograd. The Central Committee voted in favour of Lenin's motion for the insurrection on October 10. Among those present, only Kamenev and Zinoviev voted against it. Under the proposition of the Petrograd Soviet, the Congress of Soviets of the Northern region convened the Second Congress of Soviets on October 25. Soldiers' delegations from the front joined the Bolsheviks. The Petrograd regiments that repressed the Bolsheviks in July now became neutral and some were convinced to be at the service of the revolution.

Trotsky organised the insurrection: to take strategic positions in the capital, to monitor the garrison, to face the forces of repression faithful to Kerensky with a view that a peasants' and workers' government would result from the Soviets' Congress. Kerensky was aware of it. However, his initiatives collided with the masses. The relationship between the army and the workers turned out to be a crucial issue.

It appeared that only the Bolshevik Party was able to achieve peace immediately. The MRC (Military Revolutionary Committee) was vested by the Bolshevik Party and by the anarcho-syndicalist propaganda union. Besides, the Mensheviks and the Populists decided to boycott it since it questioned the authority of the staff. On October 18, an illegal conference of the soldiers' committee took place, the last regiments still hostile to Peter and Paul fortress were acquired to the revolution by Trotsky, and its armoury came under the MRC's control. The Bolshevik Party declared that October 22 was the "day of the Petrograd soviet." This day was a day of the parade for the Red Army and meetings with an important popular audience. The Bolshevik Party decided to organise the insurgency on October 24–25 overnight, on the day before the Soviets' Congress. Red Guards and regiments allied with the MRC took over key points, such as print shops, post offices, bridges, power plants, barracks, state banks, arsenals and roads, with 10,000 workers and soldiers.

The Kerensky government attempted to counter-attack. The chief staff ordered the *Aurora*, a military cruiser, to stand guard before the Winter Palace, where the

Cadets–RP–Menshevik government lodged, to afford its protection. However, the *Aurora* sailors took the side of the MRC, and they gave a warning shot to the building.[6]

During the night of October 25, the ministers were arrested, and Kerensky escaped in a car given by the US embassy. Only a few people were dead or injured in the uprising. The officers who swore not to take arms against the Soviets' power were released. Actually, they did not keep their promise later. Early on October 25, the MRC published its victory statement. In Moscow, where the party was led by Bukharin, it was a different story. It was very late when the Soviets built an MRC so that the counter-revolution could be organised. The municipal parliament (Duma) met with all the parties, except the elected Bolsheviks, and it decided to build a "Committee of Public Safety" as opposed to the Soviets, which had a Bolshevik majority. The Soviet headquarter, in the city centre, far from workers' areas, was surrounded on October 25 by graduate officers and by the armed bourgeois youth. "The fight was harder in Moscow: some indecisiveness in the 'Reds' allowed the 'Whites' to chase the Bolshevik troops away from the Kremlin" (Coquin, 1962, p. 120). The proletariat and the revolutionary workers fought for six days against the counter-revolutionary forces and finally beat them.

The first measures of workers' and peasant power

On the evening of October 25, the Second Congress of the Soviets met in Petrograd. The assembly was different.

> It was so difficult to imagine an assembly that would have been more different than the February Soviet or than the previous congress in June. Few intellectuals were here, even fewer officers. There were only soldiers in their old-fashioned tunics, bearded peasants wearing boots and sheepskin coats, unshaved workers.
>
> (Coquin, 1962, p. 113)

The Congress consisted of 680 deputies: 390 Bolsheviks, 150 Social Revolutionaries, 80 Mensheviks and 60 right-wing Social Revolutionaries. The Mensheviks and the right-wing Social Revolutionaries left the Congress when it was announced that the Winter Palace fell and that the regiments sent by Kerensky in Petrograd rallied the insurrection. The Congress endorsed the insurrection and took power.

An order on land was first adopted which developed the influence of the revolution in the countryside.

> This decree alone would make the new authority invincible, by assuring it of the support of millions of peasants. . . . In drawing up this crucial draft,

> Lenin took the wording from the 242 decrees which local peasant Soviets had passed in conformity with the agrarian program of the Socialist-Revolutionary party.
>
> (Serge, 1930, p. 89)

A second decree was taken to propose an immediate peace between all the warring parties. It concluded on a call to working classes in France (revolutions since 1789), in Germany (the creation of workers' organisations and the fight against anti-socialist laws) and Britain (the Chartist movement).

> The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism. . . . All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.
>
> (Lenin, 1917d)

This decree also recognised self-determination for the populations formerly oppressed in the Russian Empire.

The third decree set up a new government. On Trotsky's suggestion, it was named the Council of People's Commissars, in which the 15 members had all been exiled or jailed. The RSP left-wing entered the government in December. The Congress appointed a new Central Executive Committee of the Soviets with 71 Bolsheviks and 29 Left-RSP.

It makes no doubt that women's rights were one of the strongest achievements of the revolution, which include the right to vote, the right to instruction (while 87% of women were illiterate in 1917), equal wages for equal work, right to abortion (later abolished under Stalin in 1936), civil marriage, facilitation of divorce, payment of benefits for motherhood and abolition of the difference between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" children. However, to be honest, it needs to be added that women had reached several achievements since the feminist movement started in the early 18th century, in a context where the female condition was particularly bad, even if it was circumscribed to the aristocracy.[7] Feminist issues spread in the country with the construction in 1895 of the "Charity Association of Russian Women" by Anna Filosofova in defence of women's rights (see De Haan et al., 2006). If the women's movement demands equality of rights, some are reformists, while others are revolutionary, including anarchists and socialists (see Glickman, 1984). When Alexandra Kollontaï, who was to become the first female in a government in modern history, created a group of female workers, she was formally supported by Lenin, but the party had no position on the women's

organisation before October 1917. The party was not feminist, but it is clear that the women's condition benefitted, as some kind of side effect, of the Bolshevik Party's defence of equality.

Education was another achievement of the revolution. From 1918 to 1920, the number of primary schools doubled from 38,387 to 79,115. While the budget for instruction was 195 million roubles in 1916, it increased to 940 million after February revolution and then to 3 billion in 1918 and 10 billion in 1919. In 1917, only two schools were training non-Russian school teachers. They were 37 in 1920 and more than 4,000 in 1922. Art, science and culture were also part of these improvements. Important authors, including Tolstoi, Turgenev, Gogol, Pushkin, Scott, Mérimée and Zola, were reissued, and museums were significantly developed. Such a practice relied on the liberation but also had an ideological component, and the art could be used as a propagandist tool. This became obvious with the bureaucratisation of the country when several artists had to leave the country for fear of being tortured or murdered. After describing the events and first consequences of the 1917 revolutions, we will now discuss the consequences of the end of this experience, from the 1980s until now.

Collapse of the Soviet Union and its consequences

In this section, we discuss the period from the collapse of the Soviet Union up to the early 2020s. After exploring the complexity of the movements that led to this collapse, after having taken a look at the movements that developed in Eastern Europe, we analyse the implications for the workers in capitalist countries, mainly in subjective terms as a collapse of class consciousness, including in working-class parties.

In the late 1980s, in a context of isolation from the world labour market and the international division of labour and of the arms race against the United States, both the orientations of the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union and the pressure of the Western countries were heading towards the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. If it was giving opportunities to the capitalist economy, the arms race was a high burden for the Soviet bureaucracy, which was basically in favour of the capitalist restoration. Such was the sense of Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost: end of the arms race, cooperation with the capitalist world and steps towards the "market economy," which sounds like a cover-up for the restoration of capitalism, together with a limited political liberalisation.

The working classes in Eastern Europe were the strike forces of the revolutionary movements against the bureaucracies, and these forces destabilised the bureaucracy in Moscow. The aspirations and demands of these movements were complex and contradictory. On the one hand, they were heading towards a political revolution to achieve socialism; on the other hand, they were under the pressure of the capitalist world's ruling class. Being attracted to what the ruling capitalist countries displayed, they demanded basic democratic freedoms, which were consistent with the democracy in the Western world.

Even with the dislocation and collapse of the Russian bureaucracy, together with its satellites, their practice of power did not disappear. They identified with Marxism, the October Revolution, Bolshevism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and what they did was denigrate them. The bureaucracy denied the working class its history by eliminating, literally and metaphorically, what could relate to the 1917 October Revolution, to its tradition, to its history. The bureaucracies eliminated the working-class movement in Eastern Europe and many former revolutionaries within the Bolshevik tradition, including assassinating Trotsky.

The movements in Eastern Europe

The first events announcing the collapse of the Soviet Union appeared precisely in its main zone of influence, which was built as a set of satellites under the influence of Moscow after the Second World War, namely Eastern Europe. These regimes, from East Berlin to Warsaw, did not rise from a social revolution but could rather be seen as a bureaucratic by-product of the bureaucracy's desire to enlarge its sphere of influence against the US rule in the Western world.

The general strike in Poland in August 1980 was typical. The working class was fighting, but the leaders were related to the Catholic hierarchy and controlled the movement. They took Solidarność under control. In 1989, the mass movements in Eastern Europe were mostly led in relation to Christian hierarchies, sometimes by former bureaucracies favouring the restoration of capitalism. Most of the time, the former state bureaucracy adapted to new political and economic regimes. First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party Jaruzelski organised negotiations with Solidarność and the Catholic Church to reform the regime. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a churchman, became the Prime Minister on September 8, 1989. The Solidarność leaders took the state bureaucracy and mainly preserved it. Poland became officially a "market economy" on January 10, 1990.

In Hungary, the transition was organised by the ruling party, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (MSZDP), which became the Socialist Party of Hungary (MSZP). The opposition, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, came to power in 1990 after parliamentary elections. In Czechoslovakia, after an important student demonstration was repressed on November 17, 1989, 19 "Civic Forum" organisations were formed to negotiate with the government. Demonstrations increased, and the KSČ (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) was in crisis: ministers were fired, and the government and then the president Husak resigned under popular pressure. Under the acclaims of the demonstrators, Alexander Dubček and Václav Havel were respectively appointed President of the Federal Assembly and President of the Republic. Elections in June and July 1990 confirmed this. In Bulgaria, the transition was more complex. The ruling party was clinging to power in the context of a political crisis and mass demonstrations. The transition was organised after the October 1992 elections by a coalition between the opposition (Union of Democratic Forces) and the ruling party, which became the Bulgarian Socialist Party. In Romania, a new power (the National Salvation Front Council, led by Ion

Iliescu) was facilitated by the execution of the Ceausescu couple. Petre Roman became the prime minister, and the May 1990 elections confirmed Iliescu as the President of the Republic and the National Salvation Front Council as the parliamentary majority. All this shows that organisations in favour of the restoration of capitalism controlled the mass movement from the beginning, with the support of the former bureaucracies.

In the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy was mainly defeated by the working class in favour of national rights for people all over the country. Early 1988, important movements were such that Latvia, Estonia, Georgia and Armenia declared their full independence. The Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Moldavia, Belorussia and Ukraine proclaimed their sovereignty. Kazakhstan passed a bill on economic independence, and Kirgizstan prepared a bill for proclaiming its sovereignty. This led to the Minsk meeting in December 1991, where officials from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine dissolved the Soviet Union and proclaimed the Commonwealth of Independent States for all the states in the former Soviet Union.

A part of the Marxist tradition defended the claim that capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union would be a blow to workers all over the world. Just after the restoration of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the transformations were significant. This became even stronger after the bloody repressions by the Soviet army in Eastern Germany in June 1953, Hungary in November–December 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

A new step was taken with the capitalist renewal. Not only were the material consequences huge, with a colossal increase in inequalities (the part of the wealth of the 1% richest went up from 4% in 1991 to 20% in 2016, and the poorest lost half of their income, according to Novokmet et al. (2017), but it also led to the widespread opinion that the workers' states were not sustainable and that the capitalist restoration was unavoidable in the long or short term. This was full political disorientation, and the ruling class speech was hammering the message that the adventure finished in a bust. This was a new situation for the workers, and the leaders of the social democrat and Stalinist parties substantially changed their attitude and speech in favour of capitalism. This radical shift disoriented the workers, and as such it appeared that the social democrats and Stalinists acted as the agents of a systematic decline of the consciousness of the workers, who were then disoriented. This amounted to a general theoretical loss for all the oppressed (workers and youth). The new period that opened in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall was unquestionably a historical turn.

After the Russian tanks crushed the revolutionary movements in Eastern Germany and then the Hungarian revolution, the German social democracy adopted a new programme, which included the following:

> Democratic Socialism, which in Europe is rooted in Christian ethics, humanism and classical philosophy, does not proclaim ultimate truths. . . . The Social Democratic Party is the party of freedom of thought. It is a community

> of men holding different beliefs and ideas. Their agreement is based on the moral principles and political aims they have in common.
>
> (German History in Documents and Images, 1959, p. 1)

This new programme does not mention the class struggle or the specific interests of the working class anymore. The SPD became a "people's party." Any reference to Marxism or socialism was abandoned in favour of the co-management of firms and of the defence of private ownership within the *Basic Law of the German Federal Republic*.

It seems that such a programme is clearly the opposite of Marxism and the interest of the working class. It happened at a time when dropping any reference to socialism and the working class, even if formal, was a general movement for all the parties that had not done their "Bad Godesberg" yet. However, there is a major difference: all the push against the reference to socialism was because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the state ownership of the means of production, the planned economy and the monopoly of foreign trade. It was on the basis of this claim that the social-democratic and Stalinist parties explained that socialism failed and that only capitalism has a future.

The Labour Party moved in this way. In April 1995, the leadership had Clause 4 repealed. It had been adopted in the Constitution of the Labour 77 years before in favour of "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service" (in Coates et al., 2000, p. 4). The clause was replaced by the statement, written on the back of the cards of the members, that

> the Labour Party . . . believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone [and that] a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and cooperation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper, with a thriving public sector and high quality services.
>
> (Ibid.)

Such a historical withdrawal of Clause 4 fell within a reform started two years before for changing the voting rules in the party, including a new modality called "one man/one vote," which amounts to fully escaping the control of the unions over the party. This was only a part of the attempts to reduce the influence of the unions, while they form the substantial relation between the party and the working class.

Similar movements were tried in the French Socialist Party, including appointing the European bureaucrat Jacques Delors as a presidential candidate. However, he withdrew, probably because of the hostility of the traditional voters of the Socialist Party. Nevertheless, the party was weakened, and the only international organisation still alive, the "Socialist International," was an organisation of cooperation between the social-democratic parties with capitalism.

The communist parties

The Stalinist parties dropped the issues of the working class, of the expropriation of the means of production and exchange. They also questioned the October Revolution. As such, the 29th Congress of the French Communist Party (PCF, 22–25 December 1996 in La Défense) was remarkable: it asked the delegates to make no difference between egalitarianism, statism and Stalinism and to convoke Marx against the workers' state and the proletarian dictatorship. Yet Marx (1852, pp. 62–65, stress in the original) made clear that

> [his] own contribution was 1. To show that the *existence of classes* is merely bound up with *certain historical phases in the development of production*; 2. that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*; 3. that this dictatorship itself constitutes no more than a transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.

In 1850, *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*'s editor-in-chief blamed Marx for advocating the dictatorship of the working class and the abolition of the classes. For Marx and Engels (1848),

> [i]f the proletariat during its contest with the . . . makes itself the ruling class, . . . then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

Meanwhile, the French Communist Party proposed overcoming class contradictions and avoiding both statism and collectivism. This meant an open refusal to expropriate capital, to defend the workers' state and the planned economy, that is, socialism. Overcoming capitalism in this way means that capitalism has a future.

What this means overall is that the working-class consciousness is devastated. The social-democratic parties and the former Stalinist parties relied on this situation to further disorient the working class politically and theoretically. As a matter of fact, the revolutionary activity of the working class was far from what it was during the 1970s and even the 1980s, so the capitalist regained the initiative. The restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a decisive blow against the world working class. Even if it increased in quantitative terms, it lost in terms of subjectivity. The issue is not the number but also the leadership:

> The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.
>
> (Trotsky, 1938)

Nevertheless, even if it suffered several defeats, the working class was not definitely beaten. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it acquired several

gains, including gains in terms of organisation. The unification of the German working classes should be seen as a positive element. As for now, capitalism reached such a situation of decay that a huge dislocating crisis is on the agenda, together with a growing hostility of the capitalist class against the working class.

In Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Russia and China[8] more recently, capitalism has been the ruling mode of production for 30 years. Such a collapse, including the bureaucratic regimes, changed international relations, the German state became the leading European country, and the United States became hegemonic for a couple of years. Nevertheless, the accumulation of fictitious capital has been threatening capitalism, as the 2008 Crisis (see Kliman, 2015) and now the COVID crisis (see Lyon-Callo, 2020) have shown. Capitalism looks like a colossus with feet of clay.

Concluding remarks

As the first workers' revolution having – temporarily – succeeded in the history of humanity, the Russian revolution holds a singular place in the recent history of humanity. The very specific character of Russia in the world capitalism in the early 20th century made the occurrence of a revolution both apparently contradictory and substantially plausible. Many important debates were occurring within working-class parties, and the specific situation during the First World War made more likely the development of revolutionary movements, especially a couple of years after the 1905 revolution. The February Revolution led to the overthrow of czarism, as the Russian version of feudalism and the resulting problem of dual power were resolved with the October Revolution, which established a workers' power with the Bolshevik Party. This power turned into a bureaucracy, and the Soviet Union collapsed 74 years later, with huge consequences for the world's class struggle and as a larger space for capitalism, in both ideological and economic terms. Such is the 21st century: full domination of capitalism. Therefore, if the protests did not disappear, they took a very different form, and we think that, from the period we studied here, there is much to "learn for those who now still have emancipation as a target" (Aunoble, 2016, p. 11; translated by author). Beyond controversies, the break-in of the Russian revolutions in world history has been one of the few major events that disrupted the world order. In opening then a historical possibility, with the hope of collective emancipation through the revolutionary struggle, it created hope for a higher society, including direct democracy, radical equality and human community, goals which universal values may inspire as they help us understand the current movements.

Notes

1 See (Zizek, 2019), (Lordon, 2021) and (Cervera-Marzal, 2021).
2 Born in May 1851, Elizaveta Dmitrieva was a revolutionary activist. She co-founded the Russian section of the International Workingmen's Association; she discussed with Karl

Marx on the possibility of Russia's socialist transition without a capitalist stage and she took an active part in the Paris Commune.

3 All the dates before January 31, 1918, are given according to the Julian calendar, which was used until then.

4 Now Saint Petersburg.

5 March 8 according to the Gregorian calendar.

6 The role played by the Aurora in the revolution is debatable on several issues. What is commonly accepted is that the cruiser turned to the revolutionaries' side. Kerensky had already left when the MRC "reversed the order [of leaving Petrograd's waters] and the cruiser stayed where it was, ready at any time to put all its strengths at the service of the Soviets' government" (Trotsky, 1918). The controversy is at least on two issues. First, whereas some claim that "the Aurora . . . was crucial in the final capitulation of the Provisional Government" (Petrov, 2020), others "urge not to exaggerate the role of the Aurora" (Sokolov and Sukhorukova, 2019). Second, some defend the claim that it was a blank shot that "the battle cruiser Aurora never fired on the palace; it only fired a signal round" (Sasse, 2020), others mention "cannonballs shot from the cruiser Aurora" (Gayraud, 2012), following the "two shells from the battleship Avrora" (Reed, 1919).

7 After 1753, married women could be the owner of their goods.

8 Even if the ruling party is named "communist," even if the cult of authorities inherited from the former period is still on, a significant part of its members are capitalists. With a labour market, private companies in the international stock markets, a place in the WTO . . . China became capitalist.

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Chapter 2

With the intention to be subjective

The rhetoric of contemporary liberal media in Russia*

Ruslan Saduov

Motivation and goal

A protest is typically defined as an objection to something. It could be a reaction to injustice, deprivation of rights or resources or anything that causes a strong feeling of disagreement. A protest can take many forms: a verbal statement by an individual or a march of a group, a peaceful expression of opinion or a violent storm. The multifaceted nature of protest makes a holistic definition of the concept hard to provide, rendering a scholar helpless in the face of such a task. I, therefore, will stick to a broad understanding of a protest as an expression of discontent.

That this chapter is authored by a linguist further limits the construction of protest. Specifically, I intend to discuss a verbal discontent with life in Russia in the early 2020s. Such disagreement extends to political and economic life before any other social sphere. Nevertheless, I do not limit this chapter to policy discussion alone. Instead, I will concentrate on the way the verbal protest manifests itself. Hence, the objective is to provide an insight into the verbalisation of discontent in Russia in 2021.

While discussing the language of protests, I will resort to contemporary constraints existing in Russian law concerning public statements to explain how and why such limitations shape the protest discourse. Journalists and activists adjust their statements to avoid legal consequences by resorting to abundant linguistic means. Such attempts shape how the oppositional language was used in Russia in 2021 and represent the subject of this chapter's discussion.

Material

In this chapter, I will rely on the examples selected from the independent press because their statements are most critical to public policies and strategic in avoiding the legal consequences of their publications. Most independent venues are private and, thus, to cut costs, online.

The circumstance that the oppositional press is online primarily requires additional commentary for several reasons. First, such content seeks a younger audience than traditional press and TV. This fact influences the type of content selected

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for the editions and language use. Second, the online content is a priori more interactive than TV and printed newspapers. Such interactivity involves using multiple channels, such as text, visuals and audio. Third, the ways of presenting the information, both linguistically and extralinguistically, are also different compared to the conventional media presentation.

"The medium is the message," Marshall McLuhan concluded from his extensive media research. The technology of the early 21st century allows journalists to create multimodal messages. Outlets usually present their content on multiple social media platforms. They offer it in different ways depending on the nature of the channel. For instance, while YouTube suggests entirely visual content, Telegram messages are predominantly verbal with the insertion of pictures and videos. The amount of text depends on the platform as well: a Twitter[1] post has to be small, a Telegram post can be substantially longer and an Instagram[2] post can be long, but the text has to be preceded by a picture.

Aware of the fact that the medium influences the message, I also realise that covering independent media on all platforms is a task too broad for this chapter. Instead, I concentrate on the content of several oppositional outlets on one platform, Telegram. Telegram was chosen for this research because of its popularity and reputation: to date, its overall audience exceeds 500 million users (Batyrov, 2021). What causes its popularity is convenience as well as privacy guarantees. From 2017 to 2020, Telegram was unsuccessfully blocked by the Russian authorities due to the unwillingness of the Telegram owner Pavel Durov to allow the Russian law enforcement agencies to decipher user messages. However, governmental agencies and top officials used Telegram for private purposes even during this period of conflict (Antonova, 2018).

The examples for this chapter were sourced from five oppositional outlets, each of which deserves a brief presentation. A note needs to be added that several of these outlets were titled *innostranny agent*, a foreign agent, an outlet sponsored from abroad. Respective notes were added in the descriptions of those outlets, and such notes hold for the entire chapter:

- Pivovarov[3]'s Redaktsiya: a private project initiated by a well-known Russian journalist Alexei Pivovarov. His main objective is to provide unbiased coverage of important social and political events.
- DOXA[4] is an independent student journal discussing contemporary university life in Russia. Though the focus of DOXA is narrow, its articles reflect Russia's social and political spheres as soon as they are related to education. Its editors do not distinguish between university and politics believing that anti-authoritarian and democratic space within a university is an important political action also outside it.
- StalinGulag is the nickname of Alexander Gorbunov, a Russian blogger who hid his identity until 2019. StalinGulag is one of the foremost critics of the early 2020s Russian authorities.
- Sandy Mustache (Usy Peskova) is an anonymous channel on Twitter, Telegram and other social media. Its name alludes to the Press Secretary of Russian

President Dmitry Peskov (and his moustache). The channel is believed to be maintained by a group of oppositional bloggers who satirise Russian politics.

- Meduza[5] is an independent Russian-language Latvian journal started by Galina Timvhenko, a former chief editor of Lenta.ru. Meduza is a moderately oppositional online edition about the early 2020s Russian life. It strives to provide objective coverage, and the professional community has highly praised its efforts. From 2016 to 2021, Meduza has won a monthly journalist award Redkollegia 25 times.

These outlets were hand-picked from among other oppositional media due to their representative audience and prominence. Medialogia rates Pivovarov, StalinGulag and Sandy Mustache among Russia's top 30 political channels (Top-30 Telegram Channels, 2021). Meduza and DOXA have always been prominent in the landscape of sociopolitical discourse. However, these channels received even greater prominence with the latest legal constraints (Meduza was declared a foreign agent and DOXA's editors arrested). Besides, Meduza kept the first line among Russia's top 30 most cited social media sources (Ibid.).

Importantly, these outlets represent the two trends in the oppositional movement. One is trying to provide an unbiased view (Pivovarov, DOXA, Meduza), while the other (StalinGulag and Sandy Mustache) provides an explicitly biased, ironic or mocking attitude to Russian social and political life.

(Extra)linguistic strategies

Russian independent outlets use a range of (extra)linguistic strategies. However, some of such strategies would be more typical than others because they are predetermined by the current legal constraints and the sociopolitical climate. In this section, I intend to list some of the most relevant of such strategies without any ambition to provide a comprehensive list, which is a task too complicated and beyond the scope of this chapter. The reason (extra) is added to the name of this section is because media text rarely comes without a picture or video, and pictorial additions to the text take such a text outside the purely linguistic boundaries. Therefore, this chapter discusses multimodal rather than regular text.

Besides, I apply a discursive approach to such texts. It means that I consider the context of a particular text, that is, the text to be immersed in the context of real life. Such an approach is essential because it helps to account for the authors' hidden motivations and explains seemingly counterproductive and harmful strategies.

Staying subjective

Journalism's major merit is staying impartial to the topics it covers. Unbiased observation underlies the journalists' ethics code, and college students are generally taught to avoid subjectivity. When journalists are accused of being biased, they lose their reputation and find it hard to stay in the profession. However, in many cases, Russian oppositional journalists intentionally demonstrate subjectivity.

Alexey Pivovarov is one of the famous journalists who explicitly highlights his bias. For instance, when introducing his video overview of the major news events, he claims to discuss them "briefly and subjectively" ("kratko i subjektivno") (Pivovarov, 2020). Similarly, he uses parenthetic phrases such as "I think," "it seems" and "it could be." For instance, when discussing a laughable episode whereby a man opened a cupboard (it turned out it was a door) from inside and looked out during the video report made by a regional official, Pivovarov commented: "It is good it was not a skeleton who came out. I think, . . . officials, like many people, have a few of them in their cupboards" (Pivovarov, 2021a). No doubt that the journalist uses this extended metaphor transformed from a well-known proverb (there is a skeleton in every cupboard) to imply that public officers have a few secrets to hide. However, the utterance is presented as a private opinion of the journalist rather than as a statement of fact. In another post on Telegram, Pivovarov offered an extract of an interview with an expert who claimed that a recent oil spill is a repeated problem and could be solved if the guilty company wanted to. The video was introduced with a vague expression: "This fragment, it seems, is important" (Pivovarov, 2021b). "It seems" was probably introduced to avoid responsibility for the claim made by the expert. Without the modality of uncertainty ("seems"), Pivovarov could be accused of implying that the company responsible for the spill neglected the apparent danger. Thus, an action could be filed against the journalist for ruining the company's business reputation.

Other media outlets use a similar practice. For instance, the titles of articles in Meduza often include parenthetic phrases and modality of uncertainty: "Soon, innovative medicines in Russia may become cheaper. However, the drugstores will, probably, end up selling generics of inferior quality. It is because compulsory licensing was made easier" (*Source Disguised*). In this example, the journalist avoids directly naming the outcomes of the proposed initiative to ease compulsory licensing. To do so, they use a modal verb (may) and a parenthetic word (probably), both denoting probabilities. The use of such linguistic means is predetermined by the topic: fewer requirements for licensing may (but not necessarily will) lead to lower quality. Besides, a statement would inevitably put the journalist in danger of being sued for defamation because the information in the article would be presented as a fact.

In the examples above, the analysis of the article and videos reveals that journalists stayed unbiased. They offered clear overviews of the news and events. However, they declared their messages subjective. At first glance, it seems to be a paradox that established outlets choose to ruin their reputation. However, a closer look into the Russian legal environment helps explain the paradoxical behaviour.

At the end of May 2021, it became known that the court ruled out that Meduza should be fined for its article about businessman Evgenii Prigozhin and was obliged to delete it. The publication titled "Evgenii Prigozhin's Right to Be Forgotten. What does the Caterer who Served Russian Presidents Wants to Hide" was about a Russian businessman who required Yandex, Google and Mail.ru to

exclude publications about him from the search results. Such cases are not unique when journalists or outlets bear legal consequences for their publications (*Source Disguised*). Such consequences follow when the publication contains something that can be questionable or intolerable from a legal standpoint.

In Russian law, a fact and an opinion are somewhat distinct. The latter is protected by Article 29.4 of the Constitution: *Everyone shall have the right to freely look for, receive, transmit, produce and distribute information by any legal way* (The Constitution of the Russian Federation, n.d.). It is, therefore, safe to offer an opinion. As soon as one utters a fact, they become potentially subject to the provisions of the Russian Criminal Code on defamation, extremism, hate speech and relatively new articles on wounding religious feelings and insulting World War II veterans. As soon as the court can prove that the journalist was not entirely correct and formulated their message as a fact, they may be fined or convicted for a period of two to three years (Criminal Code Articles 282 or 148). Another possible consequence is being listed as an extremist and terrorist and being limited in finances: all electronic finances may be blocked, and the cash withdrawals remain at the level of the minimum wage.

Therefore, journalists, like other public figures, must be careful when wording the content of their messages. Not infrequently, journalists are accused of committing a speech crime or inciting hatred, insulting or lying. Such accusations cause reputational risks to journalists, financial burden if the journalist is fined and even legal consequences such as going to jail. To avoid such impractical results, journalists tend to present the result of their investigation as an opinion, which the Constitution of the Russian Federation protects.

StalinGulag goes further than that. Since the channel's author is a blogger rather than a journalist, his statements are always worded as personal and highly subjective opinions. For instance, as a reaction to a lawsuit against DOXA (student journal) editors, he posted a harsh text against Russian studentship:

> Yesterday, four employees of the student journal DOXA were sentenced to home arrest for two months . . . The main crime of these DOXA guys is that they talk to the youth. In a country where youth is shouted on and ordered to comply with the absurd produce of an old man's wits, the DOXA team raised the issues of freedom, rights and law . . . let's be honest: Russian studentship of the latest decades has been the most disgraceful social phenomenon that produced nothing but their fears and neuroses; loosely knit infantiles who rejected their bold dreams and chose to be content with the deceitful old man's tales.
>
> (StalinGulag, 2021)

In this post, StalinGulag offers criticism concerning two phenomena. The first is the arrest of the DOXA editors, who promoted the right of students to protest. The second is the inability of students to oppose the current sociopolitical constraints.

While doing so, StalinGulag uses rather aggressive language calling students a "disgraceful social phenomenon" and blaming them that they "produced nothing but their fears and neuroses." At the same, the author does not use any language that would be punishable under Russian law. Phrases such as "let's be honest" point at the subjective nature of the utterance. To be fit for a lawsuit, accusations need to be addressed to a specific person while allegations against a group are far more dubious in legal terms. Besides, such allegations do not include any socially unacceptable or morally corrupt behaviour for them to be qualified as defamation. The criticism against the authorities is also indirect. In place of specific government agencies or officials, the author addresses a metaphorical image of the authorities presented as an untruthful old man with outdated views ("deceitful old man's tales"), which can be attributed to nobody specifically.

Use of rhetoric devices

Oppositional outlets are particularly eager to be persuasive. To this end, they use the most effective rhetorical devices such as testimony, facts and statistics, examples and narratives. Other outlets, of course, including the official ones, also use these devices. However, oppositional journalists use them more frequently to make the texts more "concentrated" and aggressive in their persuasive factor.

A typical way to manipulate information is to provide unrepresentative interviews of people who promote a particular opinion. It is used only by some independent media. Usually, Sandy Mustache publishes a video whereby "random" people are interviewed and recorded what they think when asked a question. Of course, everyone cannot have the same opinion on an issue. Nevertheless, the video shows that all or most people transmit a similar message. Rendition of public opinion is one-sided. Not only are the interviewees few, but also they tell only one part of the story. Two factors are important here. First, reliance on the wisdom of ordinary people, which is named *lay testimony* in rhetoric, is a potent trick with persuasive potential. Appealing to the common sense of a typical representative of the general public, a *vox populi*, is a popular way of persuasion since it adds "authenticity and compassion to ideas" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 177). Second, such videos give the impression that all or at least most people agree with the opinion because the video does not show anyone who would have a different opinion. Osborn specifies that lay testimony cannot be used to "establish the objective validity of ideas" (Ibid.). However, this rhetoric device is frequently misused to substitute the wish for reality.

Even more interesting is that in other cases, the video shows that all interviewees (or a single interviewee) provide an opinion contrary to the one promoted by the outlet. However, the way people in the video look or talk are, in this or another way, aversive or grotesque. That way, the viewer acquires an opinion contrary to the one transmitted in the video because they want to dissociate themselves from whom they see. Such videos can be supplemented with an ironic commentary that would highlight the lack of common sense or aversive personal traits of the people

in the video. An example of such an interview is the one with a female who provided her support to the current President Putin, claiming that his achievements are outstanding but, meanwhile, agreed that economic indicators worsened during his terms (Sandy Mustache, 2021a). Throughout the interview, she demonstrates hesitation, and her speech sounds less than logical. She slants her strong support to Vladimir Putin into concession that there might be certain negative consequences for the economy. However, she tried to hold onto her support to authorities and claimed that Putin was not a god and could not extend his control over every part of life. The viewer will notice that the woman hesitates and finds it hard to provide her support to Vladimir Putin. The fact that this female, an ardent supporter of the current official, cannot find any words of support leads the viewer to conclude that such support is hardly well-grounded. As a result, they may dissociate themselves from her and, consequently, from the current President's supporters.

Along with *lay testimony*, outlets use *expert testimony*. Such testimony "comes from people who are qualified by training or experience to speak as authorities on a subject" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 177). It allows the outlet to borrow credibility and secure validity for its sociopolitical stance. For instance, Sandy Mustache frequently alludes to Sergei Guriev, a famous economist who held several high offices in Russia and since 2013 has resided in France as a Professor at Sciences Po. Extracts of interviews with him are posted to promote liberal values. In general, expert testimony is a regular rhetorical device used by outlets to raise credibility. However, the apparent peculiarity of Sandy Mustache and some other oppositional outlets is their liberal bias, whereby conservative experts are not quoted or referred to.

A similar liberal bias can be seen in *prestige testimony*, which is "citing the views of someone who is highly regarded, but not necessarily an expert on a topic" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 178). It helps to "connect your message with the ethos of the esteemed person" (Ibid.) and if opinions of only the liberal part of the political scale are used, then one might think that most famous people think liberally. For example, musician Andrei Makarevich is referred to frequently, and he aims to do what the oppositional outlets typically attempt to – to de-sacralise the power of the authorities: "I try to be rational about the authorities. They are a housekeeper in a big house" (Sandy Mustache, 2021b).

Among other examples of the rhetoric devices employed by the oppositional outlets are the use of *facts and statistics*, representing "the most objective forms of supporting material" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 170). For instance, a post by Sandy Mustache as of June 2 contained the information that every third house in the Sverdlovsk region of Russia is not connected to a sewer, hot water supply or heating (Sandy Mustache, 2021c). On the same day, they posted that 37% of Russian people do not have savings (Sandy Mustache, 2021d). In both cases, the authors provided the sources to ensure their responsible attitude to facts and figures and avoid legal consequences for posting wrong information presented as a fact.

Not only do oppositional outlets use statistics to promote their views, but they also use lay testimony to disprove the official statistics. For instance, in a video

posted on March 12, Sandy Mustache journalists approached the residents of the Magadan region to ask if it was true that the average salary in their region equals 127,000 roubles (Sandy Mustache, 2021e). The interviewees were surprised to hear such statistics and claimed their salaries ranged from 25,000 to 30,000 roubles. Apparently, the video implies that the officials are not truthful even though the video is dubious for several reasons. First, it offers only a limited sample of people out in the street. Second, the people name their salaries after tax deduction, while statistics typically include taxes, which exceed 43% in Russia (Nalogi dlya rabotodatelya, 2021). Typically, viewers do not consider such nuances, and people tend to believe the videos that imply the authorities' dishonesty.

Examples, both *factual* and *hypothetic*, as a rhetorical device, are frequently used by StalinGulag. A factual example is "based on an actual event or the experiences of a real person," while the hypothetical one is "a composite of actual people, situations, or events" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 182). Both types illustrate ideas and provide additional support. For instance, StalinGulag's post as of April 13 introduces the idea that orphans are an underprivileged and vulnerable category of the Russian population whose rights are violated regularly (StalinGulag, 2021). To support his claim, the author lists factual examples of different boarding schools and orphanages where children were deprived of adequate nutrition and medical care. In other cases, funds dedicated to children or discounted theatre tickets were stolen.

Alexei Pivovarov favours *narrative*, one of the most powerful rhetoric devices, "a story used to illustrate some important truth" (Osborn et al., 2009, p. 184). Narratives are important because they "involve listeners in creating meaning, . . . recall the past and envision the future . . . express emotions vicariously, and . . . illustrate our ideals and transmit our cultural traditions" (Ibid.). For instance, on May 11, Pivovarov posted several stories about the former convicts and their socialisation process which were related to the news that the government intends to introduce probation, whereby the former convicts would be assisted in going back to normal life (Pivovarov, 2021c). Overall, Pivovarov supports the initiative, and his stories help him to prove that without this institution, the former convicts are likely to return to their criminal life.

Feminitives

Feminitives can be defined as gender-specific nouns of the feminine gender (Chelak, 2018). In the Russian language, nouns show grammatical gender in their morphological structure. For instance, the ending *-a* in the word *shapka* (hat) shows the feminine gender. However, the names of profession are typically used only in masculine gender even though Russian grammar allows producing the feminine forms, and some typically female professions may take a feminine form quite habitually. For instance, *professor* in Russian is predominantly masculine, even with female names (e.g., professor Pirozhkova). Its feminine counterpart *professorka* may sound somewhat derogatory. Meanwhile, teacher can be used in

masculine and feminine forms without producing negative connotations (*uchitel'* and *uchitel'nitsa*).

Some activists believe that the use of masculine forms with female names is against the rules of the language and diminishes the role of women in professions typically dominated by males, especially given the fact that such domination is the past: nowadays, female professors in Russia is a commonplace fact, and in a few scholarly areas female professorships is a norm. At the same time, purists do not accept the use of feminitives because it is against the usage, and it, supposedly, diminishes the prestige of the profession. Many believe that *professorka* sounds less professional than *professor* (Merlukhina, 2021).

However, the younger generation is generally more tolerant towards feminitives, and young people are more willing to accept their use and use them too. Student journal DOXA is one of the examples of well-known establishments that use feminitives to address their female colleagues (e.g., *redaktorka* – editor) as well as to name other professions in feminine, where applicable.

The use of feminitives might be one of the forms of protest against the existing social order where women are still not equal to men. Indeed, using feminitives is a way to display an equal attitude to females, even at the language level. Breaking the linguistic usage also allows for standing out among other outlets.

Conversational language

By using the language of conversational quality, the oppositional media reach out to the target audience easily. Precise, unambiguous wording is also a way to put themselves into linguistic opposition to the official media discourse heavy with formal words and vague lexemes. Bringing across the message is more efficient when everyone can understand a message.

Such linguistic tactics could be assembled under the *intimisation strategy*, defined as "the use of linguistic means to produce an effect of confiding immediate communication between the author and the reader or listener" (Kuznetsova, 2014, p. 197). These linguistic means include lexical, semantic, idiomatic and grammatical phenomena that convey conversational style. Thus, journalists may use spoken words alongside bookish.

To exemplify this technique, I provide extracts from two oppositional sources, Meduza and StalinGulag. The former prioritises appropriate but straightforward language and well-structured and well-presented content. Journalists often predict their readers' questions and answer them in their articles. For instance, in their article about the substance E171, which is contained in chewing gums and sunburn creams, the authors divided the article into eight parts, and each part could be reached through a hyperlink and was named in the form of a question (*Source Disguised*).

StalinGulag, unburdened with the constraints of the journalist profession, uses a much more straightforward, highly conversational language: *Jesuit* (meaning treacherous) *type of arrest, criminal heaven* (about the Russian Communist party) or *idiotic deputy initiative*.

The use of conversational language is vital to building rapport with the audience. Intimisation is typical of the oppositional media because of its persuasive character while official sources would use a more formal language that may sound detaching.

Agenda setting

What topics are covered by the media is essential because the media agenda shapes the ongoing public discussion. In this case, I stem from the premise of the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw), which suggests that the media successfully shapes what the public thinks about. In other words, what shows in the media agenda is inevitably on the public agenda, that is, it is discussed by the general public and believed to be an issue of particular importance. Even though the authors of the theory did not doubt the good intentions of the media professionals, they convincingly prove that public opinion could be manipulated to some extent. By providing a certain agenda in the media, the media gatekeepers (editors of the primary media sources) shape public opinion.

Agenda setting theory has been considered irrelevant in the early 2020s because the outlets have become extremely diverse. On the one hand, every individual is capable of building their track of news sources. On the other hand, this diversity often appears to be non-existent. All major media outlets hold accounts on different media platforms and enjoy the highest numbers of readers. In many ways, they replaced their domination in print with domination on the web.

The Russian media environment should also be taken into account. A Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group study suggests that TV in 2018 was still the most influential media, with pro-governmental channels taking up 42%. Moreover, 90% of Russians watch the news on TV, and 72% opt for Channel One, a state-owned channel. Only 27% of Russians refer to the web and social media, and only 6% of Russians prefer to obtain news from foreign channels (Makukhin et al., 2018). Besides, many Russians live in remote places where main TV channels are the only source of information. Only 75.4% (as of 2019) use the internet in Russia (Issledovanie GfK: Proniknovenie Interneta v Rossii, 2019).

Given these data, agenda setting in Russia is relatively easy. Predictably, the official sources would put on the agenda the issues they believe to be the most relevant in the current discourse. By removing other topics from the agenda, the official sources inevitably limit the public's access to these issues and decrease their social value. The topics in oppositional outlets are, therefore, different from the official public sources. Oppositional media would prefer to cover less-known events of social and political importance or less-known aspects of the events from the official agenda.

In addition to establishing their agenda, which includes topics such as corruption, wrongdoing, protests, inequality or inadequate economic policy, the oppositional media suggest that the state media agenda sometimes may not include

significant national events. On January 24, 2021, Meduza published an article where its authors proved that state outlets were silent about the true nature of the nationwide protests (*Source Disguised*). Specifically, Meduza journalists highlighted that the state media did not mention that some protesters were beaten and more than 3,000 were detained. Instead, official outlets claimed that only students and schoolchildren participated in protests because they thought it would be a party. Without saying it, the outlet implied that the official agenda is not truthful.

Overall, the topics covered in the oppositional media are critical of the existing authorities. The outlets create their agenda using topics different from those covered in the official media and often point at the existing difference between their own and state agendas, suggesting that the official agenda is insufficient. It may be argued that by creating an alternative agenda, the oppositional media also create a different narrative in an attempt to attract an audience critical of the current authorities.

Vague slogans

A slogan is "a word or phrase that is easy to remember and is used by a group or business to attract attention" (Slogan, n.d.). Slogans "do not simply re-present or re-produce the social-political world, they can also function to reshape it and reconstitute it in an expressly material way" (Porter, 2010, p. 233). They are short and powerful manifestations of social or political standing.

The determinism of slogans is a powerful way to attract supporters. However, oppositional media prefer to avoid producing slogans for that same reason. A slogan, typically, requires its producer to declare a social or political standing openly because a slogan is a viewpoint worded in a short phrase. However, to declare one's view may also mean confrontation with potential opponents, which is undesirable for an oppositional outlet. The lack of a slogan allows the outlet to have a vague standpoint. Therefore, such media prefer to transmit their views through (extra)linguistic means such as texts, symbolism and vocabulary.

The only articulate slogan is used by Pivovarov's Redaktsiya. It says *Everyone understands everything*, which is an explicitly vague slogan as well. Normally, a Russian speaker says this phrase when they do not want (or do not even need to) say everything because it cannot be uttered for some reason. The slogan corresponds with the journalist's style. More often than not, Pivovarov presents facts but avoids making conclusions allowing the viewers to make their conclusions. Some of these conclusions might coincide with those Pivovarov would make himself but avoids because *everyone understands everything* without uttering it.

It may be summed up then that the oppositional outlets generally avoid producing slogans because they prefer not to clearly pronounce their political or social position to be able to migrate with their platform from being more critical to less critical depending on the situation. It allows such media to keep their audience without declaring their standing.

Discussion and conclusion

In a chapter on the case of the British press in "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society," Jürgen Habermas shows how the press represented different political forces existing in the country at that time. He suggests that in the early days, at least, the press was not too objective (Habermas, 1991). Given that, according to Benedict Anderson, media is capable of shaping the national consciousness (Anderson, 2006), the question is, how could it be established that a nation is not shaped into something the press wants it to be? To make it more complicated, not only the message itself but also the medium makes a difference. When Marshall McLuhan formulated his famous maxim that the medium is the message, he could not know how correct he was (McLuhan, 1964). In the early 2020s, the public was exposed to messages through various media, and the same piece of information may be served differently depending on the medium. I stem from the premise that Cohen's (1963) opinion that "it [the media] may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 13) is not entirely correct. Journalists and regular people empowered by present-day technology become the sources of news, and, being humans, they are subjective in their coverages.

All the outlets discussed in this chapter represent their audiences by providing a more liberal agenda that attracts a younger and liberal readership. The examples in this chapter prove that the outlets hardly ever give credit to the existing authorities offering criticism ranging from moderate to harsh and even offensive. In fact, almost all the outlets can be labelled as lean left or left. Spayd (2016) once put it about the political commentary in *the New York Times* that "conservatives occupy just a few back-row seats in this giant liberal echo chamber . . . because they don't show up in the first place," and the same could be said about the outlets discussed in this chapter. Indeed, the voices of the conservatives are scarce in the agendas of the oppositional outlets.

Such liberal orientation is somewhat limiting because the outlets do not make the slightest provision for a conservative agenda. Overall, this one-sided liberal approach makes it hard to understand the conservative viewpoint. The outlets are not too democratic to other audiences. In fact, it could be argued that not only the readers but also the outlets suffer from it. Giving the floor to opponents makes the discussion of social issues more dynamic and honest, but it just would not happen.

Based on what was discovered about the outlets discussed here, I believe the press has not changed much since its early days described by Habermas and Anderson. The press is still prone to represent a particular political force. However, the diversity of such press representing different views could be a solution to form a more democratic society.

Meanwhile, the oppositional media in Russia seem to be less welcomed. The state TV channels and newspapers offer screen time and space to liberal journalists,

Vladimir Pozner being one of the brightest examples. At the same time, such examples are not numerous, and these journalists, though liberal, demonstrate relatively moderate attitudes in their leftist orientations. The right-wing journalists seem to be more judgemental. It could be why the oppositional media construct their agenda rather aggressively. It is also apparent that they use linguistic means for promoting their cause, and one may distinguish three more comprehensive strategies in this respect.

The first strategy consists in avoiding objectivity. Statements that present facts are punishable under Russian law, and the instances when state officials file actions against journalists are not rare. Therefore, outlets have to employ evasive language and subjectivity even in cases when the journalist's investigation meets high standards of objectivity. Such bias (though declarative it is) protects journalists from legal consequences. The same reason underlies the fact that oppositional media rarely produce slogans because they tend to solidify the outlet's social or political standpoint.

The second strategy is based on constructing an agenda alternative to the one promoted officially. It implies that the formal agenda is limited or even faulty compared to the one offered by the liberal media. By introducing their agenda, the outlets try to push their issues into the public agenda so that such issues could gain public discussion.

The third strategy suggests the intentional use of persuasive language. Rhetoric devices such as testimony, facts and statistics, examples and narratives are used extensively and help present ideas efficiently. They attract attention and raise the number of readers. In some cases, the outlets use less honest techniques such as misrepresenting certain information. The question in the case is ethical: is it admissible to play with the audience? From the journalistic viewpoint, it is not. From the viewpoint of citizenship, though, the outlets may believe that what they do is socially relevant.

Notes

* Note from the editors: due to the existing social and political situation, the author is not at liberty to identify some of the sources used in the research. Such sources have been indicated as (*Source Disguised*). However, the editors confirm that they have checked that all the disguised sources exist and remain credible.

1 Twitter is prohibited on the Russian territory since the company refused to delete the content prohibited in Russia.

2 Instagram is prohibited on the Russian territory since it belongs to Meta Platforms Inc., which was recognised an extremist organisation, according to the Russian court ruling.

3 Here and elsewhere in this chapter, Alexei Pivovarov is listed as a foreign agent individual in Russia.

4 Here and elsewhere in this chapter, DOXA is listed as a foreign agent outlet in Russia. Its materials are prohibited on the Russian territory.

5 Here and elsewhere in this chapter, Meduza is listed as a foreign agent outlet in Russia. Its materials are prohibited on the Russian territory.

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Chapter 3

Semantic opposition of US versus THEM in late 2020 Russian-language Belarusian discourse

Synchronic and diachronic aspects*

Antonina Matsiunova

Introduction

Since ancient times, the phenomenon of dividing the surrounding world into US and THEM could be traced in human languages. Carl Jung (1996) calls this opposition a binary archetype, which includes eternal images and plots that exist in an individual's collective unconscious. The semantic opposition of US versus THEM reveals itself in various types of discourse, namely political, legal, media or religious. For political discourse, such a division constitutes a fundamental principle:

> The US vs THEM opposition is a characteristic of political discourse, just as the GOOD vs EVIL opposition is the foundation of morality.
>
> (Sheygal, 2000, p. 122)

In this chapter, I investigate how the semantic opposition of US versus THEM manifested in the Old Russian discourse and describe how the phenomenon was redefined during the sociopolitical confrontation in Belarus after the 2020 presidential election, when the Belarusian people expressed their discontent with the results, claiming them to be dishonest and organising numerous protests in response. The Old Russian discourse is analysed using samples of Old Russian writings from the 11th century to the 14th century. The contemporary Russian language is studied based on examples of sociopolitical, media and religious discourses (hereinafter termed "discourse") of Belarus in the period 2020–2021, represented in oral and written Russian-language journalistic texts of the same period and posts on social media networks. The objective is to assess contemporary Belarusian discourse from the point of view of its historical evolution, as well as to explain the concepts native speakers of the Old Russian language prioritised in implementing the opposition of US versus THEM and how these medieval views were distorted in the sociopolitical events in Belarus of 2020–2021.

The Old Russian discourse was formed and existed in the Common East Slavic period. The concepts established at that time (from the 11th to 14th centuries) are

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common to all Eastern Slavs, namely Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians. In this period, the foundations of sociopolitical relations were laid, and categorisation into US and THEM started to be ascertained through these concepts. The semantic opposition of US versus THEM was represented by *kin*, *family*, *language*, *freedom*, *will*, *power* and *faith*. These notions allowed one to form individual and collective identities attributed to kinship, language, shared territory and a different understanding of abstract concepts such as *freedom* or *power*.

Kin and family

In Old Russian society, US included blood relatives primarily. One of US in the Old Russian and the Proto-Slavic period always constituted a member of the family:

> The word semya (family) is formed from the ancient Indo-European root * kei- meaning "to lie" . . . in Old Russian . . . it is family in general (an extended family, though, including almost all members of the kin living together), and the servants, household members, serfs.
>
> (Kolesov, 2000, p. 40)

At that time, the family included all members of the kin and other individuals, such as servants and serfs and the non-living property of the family members. The serfs, though living creatures, were identified as property: they had no rights and were obliged to follow the orders of their owners.

The word *semya* (family) is etymologically close to the word *syabar*. *Syabar*s were members of a community united by location (or space) rather than family ties. In the contemporary Belarusian language, *syabar* means "friend," someone trusted and close.

The names of the main family members originated in the Indo-European era and have common roots in all modern Indo-European languages. The stem of a family is the main ancestor, the Father. He is the key symbol determining one's kinship and identification with a given family and bloodline. In the ontological sense, the Father is the metaphorical root of the kin. The symbol manifests itself in the Belarusian word *bat͟ska* (the Belarusian spelling of "father"). This lexeme directs us to a sacred signpost of the kin's foundation. Any attempt to carnivalise this archetypical symbol would undermine fundamental values in a patriarchal society. Indeed, the Belarusian protests of 2020 and their accompanying rhetoric destroyed the sacredness of the symbol.

In August 2020, when national protests had started after the announcement of the election results, the Telegram channel of Aleksandr Lukashenko's press office, "Pool of the First," published Russian-language stickers to support Lukashenko, "YaMyBat'ka" (I/We Bat'ka, *bat'ka* being the Russian-language spelling of "father"). The stickers implied that Lukashenko is the *bat'ka* or father of the

nation and needs national support. The choice of the word and its spelling turned out to be counterproductive for its advocates. First, the word was written in Russian letters. This mistake was apparent and made the slogan ineffective. Second, the Belarusian word *BaTSka* does exist and objectifies the concept of a family's foundation, meaning "belonging to US," while *BaT'Ka* relates to THEM. This example shows that the carnivalisation and desacralisation of the concept of the *Father* were no longer regarded as an infringement of previously respected rules. From these stickers, the lexeme *Yabat'ka* was coined as a collective term to label Lukashenko's radical supporters.

In fact, Aleksandr Lukashenko had not been called a *batska* for a long time in Belarus. This word was used to characterise Aleksandr Lukashenko among Russians, mainly following the release of a documentary titled *The Belarusian Godfather* (2010), where the word *bat'ka* frequently appeared. Most likely, the slogan was created by Russian political journalists who came to Belarus in August 2020 after many Belarusian journalists had resigned in protest against state violence.

For a contemporary Belarusian, *batska* belongs to the category of US while *Yabat'ka* would be incomprehensible and, thus, belong to THEM. Thus, the propaganda in the Russian-language media discourse of Belarus and the existing policy split society due to the fact that Aleksandr Lukashenko's radical supporters, *Yabat'kas*, enjoyed more freedom than the regime's opponents. The resulting situation generated tension and conflicts reverberating through networks of nuclear families, relatives and friends.

The contexts where the lexeme *Yabat'ka* was used, therefore, indicated that individuals terming themselves this way stressed their affiliation and political allegiance to avoid negative social and political consequences. "Tima Belorusskikh became a Yabat'ka to Avoid Prison," read a headline in the press (*Source Disguised*). Another example cited here shows how individuals set themselves in opposition to others by using the term *Yabat'ka*:

> "Answer in earnest, the way they name us, *Yabat'kas*, are you a *Yabat'ka*?" asked the host. "Yes, I am a *Yabat'ka*. You, I, and we are *bat'ka*."
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

Aleksandr Lukashenko, judging by his statements, did not treat *Yabat'kas* with reciprocate respect. Speaking of the All-Belarusian People's Assembly, he said:

> It will be a gathering of the most advanced patriots of the country, but it does not mean that only *Yabat'kas* will come.
>
> (Lukashenko, 2020b)

Lukashenko would not consider his supporters as "advanced" (meaning the most intelligent and educated) people but merely patriots. In this case, we observe the deformation and devaluation of the concept expressed by the Latin word *patria*,

meaning fatherland and *pater* (father), which goes back to the Proto-Indo-European *pə-tēr and also objectifies the idea of a founding father of a given family.

A political analyst and journalist, Petr Kuznetsov, has deliberated on the heterogeneity of the *Yabat'ka* group as follows:

> He [a Yabat'ka] does not understand anything at all – neither the real situation, nor their isolation from people and society, nor where or what abyss they are dragging these people and society to . . . but they have an absolutely dog-like, complete and unconditional devotion to a level close to religious faith.
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

The word *Yabat'ka* entered the Belarusians' lexicon after the 2020 election. The word expresses a new concept and developed into several derivatives:

(1) *Yabating* (*Yabat'ka* + *meeting*), an ironic term for rallies in support of Aleksandr Lukashenko;
(2) *Yabat'kastan* (*Yabat'ka* + suffix *-stan*, which is used to form toponyms), a sarcastic name for the Republic of Belarus among social media users;
(3) *Yabat'kism* (*Yabat'ka* + suffix *-ism*, which serves to form abstract masculine nouns that represent the names of sociopolitical, scientific and other areas) to describe a social phenomenon, a whole direction of public thought with a significant number of followers.

Estimating the number of *Yabat'ka* followers may be problematic. Political scientist Ryhor Astapenya, chairman of the Centre for New Ideas, agreed with Chatham House that "Yabat'kas represent about 20% of the Belarusian society" (*Source Disguised*). At the same time, the researcher noted that *Yabat'kas* constituted a diverse group:

> Some joined for material gains, while others are there for non-material ones. The former are the system people financially dependent on the distribution of funds within the system. . . . For them, "Yabat'kism" is a natural step precisely because they receive benefits through it. . . . The latter are people who consciously or unconsciously believe in what Lukashenko and the people around him say.
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

*Yabat'ka*s represent one side of the semantic opposition of US versus THEM in the modern Belarusian discourse. On the other side, there are the so-called incredible Belarusians. "You are incredible!" (*Source Disguised*) was the phrase expressed by Maria Kolesnikova, who represented the campaign headquarters of the Belarus presidential candidate, Victor Babariko. The phrase became the brand

name of the protesting Belarusians in 2020. The *Incredible* position themselves as the representatives of independent Belarus. They oppose the dictatorship, desiring peaceful changes and believe in democracy. According to the leader of the united opposition, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, the new Belarus was meant to be "a country for living." Some media headings concerning the *Incredible* confirmed the same notion: "Incredible Belarusians write history" (*Source Disguised*), "Nine white-red-white gifts for the New Year for the incredible Belarusians," "Belarusians: we are more than incredible!" (*Source Disguised*), "Incredible Belarus and incredible Belarusians" (*Source Disguised*), "Thank you, incredible Belarusians! – Khizhinkova thanked everyone for their support" (*Source Disguised*), "Belarusians, you are incredible, and we will definitely win" (*Source Disguised*). Many *Incredible* Belarusians write their nationality according to the grammatical rules of the Russian language: BelArus-BelArusians (as opposed to spelling in literary Russian language "BelOrussian"), emphasising their desire to follow laws without exceptions. Such spelling is a component of the media discourse of the *Incredible* Belarusians.

According to social scientists, the *Incredible* make up about 20% of Belarusian society whilst the majority of the society remains indifferent to political matters (*Source Disguised*). The *Incredible* call them the *We-aren't-into-politics* group. These people do not go to the polls, do not participate in political life and remain overall distrustful of all politicians. This group tries to belong to both the camps of the *Yabat'kas* and the *Incredible*. Nevertheless, these people are treated with scepticism by the *Yabat'kas* and with hostility by the *Incredible*.

Overall, in the Russian-language discourse of contemporary Belarus, the society is divided into three groups: the *yabat'kas*, the *Incredible* and the *We-aren't-into-politics* group. The first and second represent the extreme poles of the semantic opposition of US versus THEM, while the third, depending on the situation, can join either group, being rather opportunistic than convinced of certain political views.

Language

Another essential concept is language. In the oldest known translations from Greek, the Slavic word for *language* conveyed the meaning of the lexeme *glossa*, as "language," "tongue," "speech," "adverb" and the meaning of lexeme *ethnos*, which, in the source language, was used in the meanings of "crowd," "class," "tribe," "people," "pagans," "kin" or "breed." Thus, in the Old Russian translation of the Byzantine anthology of maxims "Melissa" (n.d.), the word *language* would correspond to both the lexeme *glossa* and the lexeme *ethnos* in the source language. Mikhailov (1912), a researcher of Russian language and literature, maintained that "kin or language is equivalent to natio, generatio" (p. 131). A *Slovenin* (derived from "slovo" meaning "word") is someone who knows words while a stranger is a *nemets* (derived from "nemy" meaning "speechless") because

they do not know the words (Kolesov, 2000, p. 140). Thus, those belonging to US would speak the same language, while THEM speak other languages. Language, therefore, became a symbol of their shared forefather.

According to the Belarusian Constitution, Russian and Belarusian are state languages, with the 2019 census reflecting this in the following proportions:

> The Belarusian language is indicated as the native language of 5,094,928 residents of the republic (54%), while 2,447,764 (26%) speak it at home. Russian is considered the native language of 3,983,765 residents of the country (42%), while 6,718,557 (71%) speak it at home.
>
> (National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, 2020)

However, the everyday use of these languages in society appears differently. All Belarusians speak Russian (obligatory at school), and only a minority use Belarusian in their daily lives. The Belarusian language is hardly to be found in official records or the justice system; it is also rarely encountered in business. Gaining a university degree in Belarusian is also impossible while Belarusian is represented only in secondary schools. In Russian-language schools, students learn Belarusian as a compulsory course. Several Belarusian-language classes may be available in Russian-language schools that outnumber Belarusian-language schools. However, Svetlana Ukleiko, an Education Ministry official, has pointed out the tendency to learn Belarusian as follows:

> Around 3,000 secondary schools are registered with the Education Ministry. Belarusian-language schools constitute 45% of them, and students are taught in their native language. Recently, parents have requested more Belarusian-speaking classes in Russian-language schools.
>
> (Uklejko, 2020)

After the 2020 election, *Yabat'kas*, typically tolerant of the Belarusian language, became openly aggressive to those who spoke it. *Yabat'kas* believed that all the *Incredible* speak Belarusian and have destabilised their previously peaceful lives. Therefore, for *Yabat'kas*, all Belarusian-speaking people would be THEM, that is, aliens. Aleksandr Lukashenko referred to Belarusian-speaking (*belaruskamounyya*) citizens with immutable irony. *Yabat'kas* employed in law enforcement turned to using violence towards Belarusian-speaking persons. Indeed, the Belarusian artist Ales' Pushkin described his time in prison as nothing more than torture:

> At some point, the riot police found my declaration, saw it was in Belarusian and said they would beat up the person who wrote it. A riot policeman read it aloud, and I was beaten up for writing it.
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

Another demonstrator Ales' Tolstyko in an interview with *Deutsche Welle* said that the use of the Belarusian language was the reason why he was denied medical care in prison:

> As soon as I got to Okrestina [temporary detention centre and centre for isolation of offenders], I asked for medical help. . . . Most of my requests were answered that no one would listen to me here until I started speaking a "normal" language.
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

It is no surprise, however, that *Incredible* Belarusians are tolerant of the Belarusian language: Belarusian and Russian are considered equally native as both languages are spoken by those who consider themselves US. Although many of the *Incredible* are Belarusian-speaking, the representatives of the opposition, the so-called women's triumvirate (Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, Veronika Tsepkalo and Maria Kolesnikova), used mainly Russian in the election campaign. Svetlana Tikhanovskaya explained this by saying that "most of the Belarusian population thinks and speaks in Russian" (*Source Disguised*).

Moreover, the *Incredible* do not feel that the Russian language is foreign to them. One of the reasons for this is that the Russian language in Belarus has several phonetic, lexical and grammatical features that distinguish it from the official variety of the Russian language used in the Russian Federation. Thus, the *Incredible* do not divide Belarusians into US and THEM by language: Russian-speaking and Belarusian-speaking people are US, *syabars*.

The *We-aren't-into-politics* group would maintain a tolerant attitude to the Belarusian language. Many of them are Belarusian-speaking people who did not support the political discourse of the oppositional women's triumvirate. In their opinion, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya did not clearly present a new language policy in her election programme. In addition, she hardly ever spoke in Belarusian during the campaign. These factors turned Belarusian-speaking voters away from the opposition. However, such voters did not accept violence against the protesters and, thus, remained in the *We-aren't-into-politics* group.

Svoboda and Volja

In modern Slavic languages, the ancient concept of *freedom* is understood differently compared with how it used to be construed. Previously, *svoboda* (freedom) denoted belonging to a certain ethnic group which, in turn, was metaphorically defined through a verb stem with the meaning "to grow, to develop" (Benveniste, 1974, p. 355). An individual does not grow up in isolation but rather together with their tribe:

> The root *swos- is a reflexive or possessive pronoun, not a personal one; it refers to any member of a given collective and expresses a reciprocal-reflexive relationship.
>
> (Kolesov, 2000, p. 109)

Serfs have no freedom or property; they do not belong to any tribe or have *syabars*. Linguist Nicholaj Rozhkov (1906) notes that although serfs have a *volja*, which is their personality, they do not have *svoboda* (freedom) and, thus, they do not belong to US. Etymologically, the word *svoboda* (freedom) and the pronoun *svoj* (belonging to US) in Slavic languages share the same root (*svo-boda* and *svo-j*). In the past, freedom also shared roots with the property; these words defined personal freedom at different stages of social development.

The concept of freedom and the free individual became another borderline issue that divided Belarusians into US and THEM after the 2020 election. An analysis of the media contexts showed that the *Incredible* considered freedom to be a blessing they gained after the election. They presented themselves as free people: "Free Belarusians from Koidanovo, Stolbtsy, Nesvizh and Minsk held a joint meeting"; "Free Belarusians sing in the metro"; "The Telegram channel 'Free Belarusians' invites everyone to fill out an application for support," "Free Belarusians, I wish you . . . what you know yourself, but then – never lose what we have acquired this summer – US" (*Source Disguised*) and so on.

The *Incredible* identified themselves as living in a community of *syabars*, ready to enter into dialogue and not accepting social division. The idea that the nation was only strong when united had already been expressed in a frequently present slogan on social media: "As long as we are united, we are invincible!" (*Source Disguised*). The *Incredible* also demonstrated solidarity with the victims of violence employed by the security forces, as well as the victims of political repression.

Svoboda is closely related to the concept of *volja*, which indicates personal freedom. Vladimir Kolesov writes: "The *volja* is just a will. . . . Over time, the word *volja* began to denote any will, gradually losing its solemnity" (Kolesov, 2000, p. 116). *Volja* (will) is understood in contemporary Belarusian as indicated in the following example:

> The Belarusian *volja* with the semantics of "freedom, independence" is used both in relation to society and in relation to an individual . . .; spaciousness, the absence of barriers – at the present stage of development of the Belarusian language, it is mainly denoted by the word *volja*.
>
> (Rudenko, 2013, pp. 145–146)

Thus, for the *Incredible*, freedom is *volja* spelled out as the right to freedom of choice, to express one's will and to think freely. The *Incredible* celebrate Freedom Day (*Den' Voli*), March 25, as the state Independence Day. On that day in 1918, the Belarusian People's Republic, the first independent Belarusian state, came into existence. *Yabat'kas*, in turn, celebrate Independence Day on July 3. On this day, the city of Minsk was liberated from the Nazi invaders granting Belarus, according to the *Yabat'kas*, freedom and independence.

Yabat'kas do not need *volja* as it may imply a responsibility for undertaken actions and decisions. Although *Yabat'kas* do not make decisions, they accept and follow the decisions made for them by the authorities. *Yabat'kas* are the "people of

the sovereign" or "people of servitude." The expression "people of the sovereign" is repeatedly used by Belarusian officials. Therefore, for example, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Yuri Sivakov called the highest state officials by this term. Natalia Kochanova, a member of the Council of the Republic, included all employees of state institutions, that is, those financed from the state budget, to the category of people of the sovereign. Dictionaries and encyclopaedias record the use of this category in the Russian Empire in relation to people who are obliged to perform military or administrative service while serving the state. On the territory of Belarus, the term "people of the sovereign" did not exist until 2020. By using such a phrase, the authorities imposed a Russian discourse on Belarusians. While the *Incredible* would entirely disagree with this name, *Yabat'kas* may embrace it. Paradoxically, even if *Yabat'kas* called themselves "people of the sovereign" and "people of servitude," they would not consider themselves serfs and would feel offended if the *Incredible* called them this way.

Many representatives of the *We-aren't-into-politics* group may know the history of Freedom Day (*Den' Voli*) and even consider it proper to celebrate it from the point of view of the historical development of Belarusians as a nation. Nevertheless, they do not publicly react to this holiday as they are also "people of the sovereign," that is, there is a higher power of the authorities over them, to which they subordinate their will, perhaps, even internally resisting. Although this group can treat such a name in an ironic manner, they will not resist this naming. According to a series of surveys, some members of the *We-aren't-into-politics* group have remained neutral: they have resisted radicalisation both by the *Yabat'kas* and by the *Incredible* (*Source Disguised*). They have realised that the social, political and legal conflicts have divided society. Such conflicts needed to be settled competently and in line with the Belarusian culture, history and values uniting all Belarusian people.

Power and faith

The Old Slavonic lexeme *vlast'* (power) and the Old Russian word *volost'* (district) described the right to own a certain land, with the land in question being the place over which this power extended. However, in the 11th-century chronicles, the words *volost'* and *vlast'* could be interpreted in two ways. The contexts of the transfer of power from one prince to another indicated that the *volost'/vlast'* no longer belonged to every family member but only to one of its representatives – the prince, that is, the main authority. Although this power could be due to one's position as a prince, a boyar (an official) or a bishop, it could also be power from God. Thus, power was sublime and immaterial.

In the Christian faith, the idea of the power of the Most High and His Absolute power is unshakable. However, over time, earthly power has lost its sacredness in becoming elective. It was no longer granted by God as it used to be in the Old Russian discourse.

The *Incredible*, not trusting the state authorities and propaganda, created organisations with similar shadowing functions. Belarus has an official All-Belarusian People's Assembly and a *Shod* (Gathering) of free Belarusians. It comprises progovernment and independent trade unions, namely the Ministry of Health and the *Belye Khalaty* (White Coats); the Central Election Commission and the *Golos* (Voice) platform. The *Incredible* displayed their protest by using the white–red–white flag, the official state symbol of the Belarusian People's Republic (1918–1919), and the Republic of Belarus state flag from 1991 to 1995. As the coat of arms, the *Incredible* use the *Pahonia*, the ancient coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which later became the emblem of the Belarusian People's Republic (1918–1919) and the Republic of Belarus during the period 1991–1995. The *Pahonia* is also present in the heraldry of some Belarusian cities. As many historians consider the white–red–white flag and the *Pahonia* as the original national symbols, the *Incredible* began to perceive the white–red–white flag and *Pahonia* as the symbols of national unification, respect for the national history of Belarus and symbols of change for the new Belarus.

The *Incredible* have considered Aleksandr Lukashenko's power illegitimate. In response, the authorities would call them "ostrokopytnye" (cloven-hoofed) who needed "camp settlement," as Nikolaj Karpenkov, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Belarus, expressed it (*Source Disguised*). Aleksandr Lukashenko has called protestors "protestuny" (a derogatory form of protestors), "narkomany-i-prostitutki" (drug addicts and prostitutes), "zmagary" (fighters), "narodets" (little people), "krysy" (rats), "ovtsy" (sheep), "debily" (morons), "mraz" (scum), "bezrabotnye prestupniki" (unemployed criminals), "obkurennye" (the stoned) and "pyanye" (drunks) (*Source Disguised*).

Lukashenko also described his opponents in the 2020 election in the following pejorative terms: "puzatyj-burzhuj" (pot-bellied bourgeois) when discussing Viktor Babariko; "sheludivyj" (mangy) in reference to Sergei Tikhanovsky and "hlyak" (boar) in describing Valery Tsepkalo. Lukashenko also compared the female triumvirate with the female pop group "VIA-gra" (*Source Disguised*).

In response to the insults, the *Incredible* transformed these characteristics into memes and carnivalised them during the protests by creating thematic posters and drawings: "Prostitutes support the people!"; "I'm curly, but not a sheep!"; "Sheep here?" – "Here!" – "Drug addicts?" – "Here!" (a mocking roll call at protest marches); "Non-sheep! Non-scum! Non-little people! We are employees of the MTZ; we are not 20 people, we are 17,000!"; "Only Cupid can shoot Belarusians!"; "Do not let granddad drink another round! (an allusion to Lukashenko's age); "Whom will we feed tomorrow?" "Sa-bach-ku!" (the Belarusian word sabachka (small dog) is consonant with the slogan "Za Bat'ku" (for father) during *Yabat'ka* meetings); "Musk, give him a rocket finally" (ridiculing Lukashenko's claim that allegedly Elon Musk personally gave him a Tesla); "Proud of my people!" and so on.

Moreover, the *Incredible* Belarusians spoke of peaceful actions towards Aleksandr Lukashenko in the language of allusion: "Happy overthrown day to you!"

(similar to "Happy birthday to you!"); "Run, Sanya, run" (similar to the title of the film *Lola rennt* in the Russian-language translation); "We've bought you a ticket to the Hague" (an allusion to the International Tribunal of Aleksandr Lukashenko for crimes against his people); "I need a salad without Onions" (in this case, the colloquial, reduced name of Aleksandr Lukashenko, *Luka:* this name sounds like Russian "luk" in the meaning "onion"). The protesters also asked: "Give us back our country for living!" (an allusion to the name of Sergey Tikhanovsky's YOUTUBE channel "Country for living," which became a key slogan of his wife's election campaign). This way, Belarusians demonstrated their creativity on the streets and the power of language as a weapon against dictatorship.

The *Yabat'kas*, however, followed the medieval tradition of the sacralisation of power, traditions continued in the totalitarian USSR and authoritarian Belarus of Aleksandr Lukashenko. Attitudes such as "you can't trample on the authorities," "the authorities know better," "you should understand it's not for us to decide, we are told to do it" and "people with initiative are punished" made people apathetic towards politics. Thus, the *Yabat'kas* followed the logic of subordinated citizens ("servants"), having lost hope of being politically influential.

The *Yabat'kas* did not oppose Aleksandr Lukashenko's views because it was necessary, in their minds, to "stop all sorts of rubbish" (Lukashenko, 2020a). *Yabat'kas* also did not care that the "all sorts of rubbish" in this case were their "syabars," a father/mother or son/daughter/grandson. *Yabat'kas* perceived the resulting civil confrontation as a "mystical, spiritual war" (the words of Gregory Azarenok, state propagandist TV), representing their attitude to the government as a mystical essence that sacralises the image of Aleksandr Lukashenko as a bulwark of this power.

Yabat'kas thus used various means to fight the protesters. For example, in the city of Homel, *Yabat'kas* would disseminate leaflets with photos of protesters and information about their private life (*Source Disguised*).

The *We-aren't-into-politics* group did not sacralise power, looking rather to the end of the confrontation affecting their well-being. For them, it was clear that their views meant nothing to the authorities (*Source Disguised*). However, as some of them had suffered from the brutality of the security forces, they began sympathising with the *Incredible*. At the same time, some of the *We-aren't-into-politics* group leaned towards the *Yabat'kas*, believing that the protests could be stopped only by force, thus restoring order.

The split in contemporary Belarusian society has destroyed its social, moral and spiritual foundations. In 2010, 58.9% of Belarusians considered themselves religious believers; 82% were Orthodox, 12% were Catholics while 6% represented other religions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, 2011).

During violent clashes between security forces and the protesters in August 2020, representatives of various Christian denominations, Jews and Muslims held a joint prayer service for peace at the Red Church in the centre of the capital city of Minsk. These believers of various faiths called for dialogue and

peace, condemning the violence. In response, the authorities blockaded the worshippers in the church and detained many of them afterwards. Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz commented on it as follows:

> These and similar actions of law enforcement officers do not contribute to the removal of tension for the sake of the speedy restoration of peace and harmony in Belarusian society, while the Catholic Church calls for reconciliation and dialogue.
>
> (*Source Disguised*)

After this statement, Archbishop Kondrusiewicz was banned from entering Belarus after visiting Poland in August 2020, despite being a Belarusian citizen.

During the protests, Catholic and Orthodox priests took to the streets in the cities of Grodno and Zhodino in the Minsk region to protect the demonstrators from the security forces by prayer. As a symbol of this peaceful action, the doors of the city's places of worship remained open to everyone.

From the very beginning, the Orthodox Church condemned any violence and brutality, calling for "a peaceful solution to the problems that have arisen in Belarusian society" (*Source Disguised*). In one of his speeches, Metropolitan Pavel, the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, asked for the violence to stop, which resulted in his withdrawal from the post by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, to which the Belarusian Exarchate was subordinated. The newly appointed head of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, Bishop Veniamin, noted that the sad events in the country occurred because the hearts of Belarusians had "leaned in the wrong direction" (*Source Disguised*).

On August 22, at a rally in Grodno, Aleksandr Lukashenko ordered the clergy to "settle down and mind their own business . . . not go along with the renegades" (*Source Disguised*). By saying this, Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed the dependence of the Orthodox Church on the secular authorities. Now, the *Incredible*, according to the authorities, were THEM also because they did not accept the "true" faith. In this approach, faith in God and faith in the state authorities were identical concepts. The authorities placed themselves as representatives of God, and church officials largely agreed with the "deformation" even though some lower-ranked priests tried to oppose it. The Orthodox Church, as Belarusian society, also experienced a lack of unity, which intensified the fragmentation and erosion of fundamental structures constituting the community.

The *Incredible* were disappointed with the church as an institution subordinated to the state. For the *Yabat'kas*, the submissiveness of the church officials to Lukashenko's regime meant recognition of their position in society as powerful and influential. The *We-aren't-into-politics* remained neutral, accepting the idea of non-resistance as a strategy to bring the conflict to its end.

Conclusion

In the Old Russian discourse, US means a group of genetically related people. Initially, they were *kin* whose father was their progenitor. Later, they became a tribe of *syabars* speaking one, OUR language and everyone enjoyed *svoboda* (freedom). Historically, THEY were outsiders, outside the home, the family, their common territory and outside their shared memory.

In contemporary Belarusian society, the semantic opposition between US and THEM is represented by the confrontation between two social groups, namely the *Yabat'kas* and the *Incredible*. The *We-aren't-into-politics* group functions between the *Yabat'kas* and the *Incredible* and its members may join either of these groups depending on how the situation develops.

This division of the Belarusian society runs through the kin resembling a split in a family with serious psychological, sociological, political and economic consequences. Deep ideological contradictions cause this division. Aleksandr Lukashenko argues that Belarus and the Belarusian nation exist only in the context of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 and the Great Victory. Given this, the genetic and mental ties with the ancient family, with the metaphorical, still pagan, forefather have been destroyed. Moreover, the concepts of one Belarusian family and kin, a common Belarusian forefather and one Belarusian language also end up being destroyed.

The split in this world view took place among people raised by an authoritarian system producing during the communist period a *Homo soveticus* mentality (one lacking initiative, obedient, apathetic, strictly following authority).

The division of the Belarusian society is likely to grow unless those who dominate the sociopolitical, economic, cultural and media discourses use narratives based on *kin, family, language, freedom, power and faith* understood in a modified and inclusive way.

Note

* Note from the editors: due to the existing social and political situation, the author is not at liberty to identify some of the sources used in the research. Such sources have been indicated as (*Source Disguised*). However, the editors confirm that they have checked that all the disguised sources exist and remain credible.

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Chapter 4

The dynamics of the 2020–2021 protests in Bulgaria

Desislava Damyanova

Introduction

In democratic societies, every protest is an expression of disapproval and contesting a given political, economic or social order. The biggest protests in Bulgaria since 2013 have expanded into demands for systemic change on three fronts: the fight against the corruption of those in power, reform of the judiciary and freedom of speech. The protests in Bulgaria during 2020–2021 were spontaneous and massive outbursts as a reaction to an overall sense of injustice. No matter how much the ruling party tried to suggest that they were coordinated and paid by someone else (Shikerova et al., 2020), these protests were the result of a natural resistance movement against Boyko Borissov, Ivan Geshev, Ahmed Dogan, Delyan Peevski[1] and everything that these figures represent, according to the protesters, namely injustice, corruption, the immense abuse of power and illegal pressure (Yotova, 2020).

As the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) has stated: "Protesters, who chanted *Mafia out* and *Resign* . . . accuse Borissov's government and Chief Prosecutor Geshev of deliberately delaying investigations into alleged links between officials and local oligarchs" (Davies and Dell'Anna, 2020).

The protesters alleged endemic corruption and wanted the prime minister, Boyko Borissov, to resign together with the centre-right government and the chief prosecutor, Ivan Geshev.

However, after announcing that he was ready to resign immediately, Borissov changed his mind and decided to push through to the end of his third term, arguing there was too much to be done concerning the coronavirus pandemic and its economic aftermath.

Background

The 2020–2021 Bulgarian protests were prompted by a profound crisis of trust in the political elites. Indeed, contesting political decisions is a deep-rooted phenomenon in Bulgaria's history, reflecting citizens' dissatisfaction with non-democratic practices resembling those in the 1990s. Thus, in a sense, the unrest of 2020–2021

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was a symbolic action against the past. Protesters' demands included reform of the judiciary, snap legislative elections, electronic voting, higher pay for medical staff and the police and improved health care and living conditions for children with special needs.

Thus, for the first time in the history of modern Bulgaria, people were protesting not against communism but injustice, inequality and the pauperisation of society. Also, for the first time, civil discontent was formed not according to an ideological framework (left-right) but in resistance to injustice.

These protests made it clear that citizens came out not with ideological demands but with a notion of living in a just state ruled by transparency, honesty and competence, not ignorance. In the 1990s, for example, people did not go to protests but rallies. They were against communism and for democracy. Subsequently, those rallies created a platform for the introduction of a new generation of politicians and transparent communication of political content – there were stages and speakers, and leaders and rock concerts were supporting the change.

However, social media networks played the role of a stage where one could find political messages. There was no need to shout into a microphone once someone started streaming live, and a broad audience could receive the message on their smartphones. Although without a prominent leader, there was a lot of genuine and strong civic energy at these protests, constituting a significant potential for change.

The protest movement united two generations, including young people who had not lived under the authoritarian regime and the older generation who remembered communism well. Both groups, however, protested together against widespread political corruption, a direct product of communism. The scale of this political dysfunction has been reflected by an international governance watchdog, Transparency International, ranking Bulgaria as the most corrupt of the 27 nations in the EU (Transparency International, n.d.).

In 1989, many people joined new parties and organisations in the hope of securing democratic reforms, free elections, freedom of the press and a free market economy. However, these hopes were soon dashed.

The rebranded communists continued to rule until 1997, keeping the introduction of reforms under their full control. The communist ruling class (*nomenklatura*)[2] and the repressive State Security apparatus exchanged their political power for veiled social and economic influence. Former members of the Communist Party and the security services still hold positions in the government, society, universities, the media and especially in business.

The civil wing of the protests demanded the full opening of the archives without any exceptions, that is, digital online records being accessible to all. The public wanted to know how the subsequent governments have instrumentalised the State Security files for their own needs. Playing around with these files, covering up for closed cliques and deliberately discrediting political opponents since 1990 have become part of the country's system of political corruption (Nering, 2020).

As Vessela Tcherneva, head of the Sofia office of the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank says: "People got very enraged because they're now convinced the oligarchy has much more power over the state than anyone can imagine and that the prosecutor general acts as a politician rather than a public defender" (Davies and Dell'Anna, 2020). Moreover, this was not confined to a political level, as corruption affects businesses too. The Bulgarian economy was said to be one of the weakest in Europe, mainly due to corruption. A 2019 report from the Centre for the Study of Democracy in Sofia on corruption in Bulgaria indicated that at least 35% of public procurement contracts involved corrupt practices (Galev et al., 2019).

An opposition politician, Hristo Ivanov, believed that the Bulgarian state and society needed a new set of values to prevent corruption. To do so, the administration needed to introduce extensive loyalty checks to verify whether a person was suitable for a particular position. Therefore, the old party *nomenklatura* and the State Security apparatus had to be isolated from power as the starting point of the "healing" process.

The next step would include cutting off connections with organised crime and foreign secret services and ending economic conflicts of interest. With this in mind, Hristo Ivanov's party (*Yes, Bulgaria*) set up a special working group under the leadership of a constitutionalist, Atanas Slavov, to develop concrete measures.

The 2020 protests could be seen as a continuation of the unrest of 2013 during Plamen Oresharski's government. Both protests aimed to target the authorities unable to break free from the State Security Service's influence operating from behind the scenes.

Although during the period 2013–2014, the government was dominated by the Bulgarian Socialist Party, in 2020, Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) took over, in a coalition with the United Patriots (a coalition of national populist parties). The latter declared a right-wing orientation, strong nostalgia and ethnic and cultural homogeneity.

The political agenda of 2020 featured not only the withdrawal of the GERB government but also changing the model by which Bulgaria had been governed for the past two decades. The real battle in the coming months of protests was to remove corrupt politicians from their posts and to prevent the continuation and reproduction of the dysfunctional system under the new government.

In the winter of 2013, people took to the streets prompted by harsh living conditions, rising prices and, especially, high electricity bills. Seven years later, the protesters demonstrated against their increasing struggle to pay bills and surging loan costs.

The political and economic reasons for the civil unrest were interconnected. The atmosphere of the protests and the participants' activism showed a determination to introduce profound structural and systemic changes preventing further deprivation of the country caused by the networks of legal and illegal actors cooperating behind the scenes. The objective was to end the oligarchic monopolisation of the country supported by Borissov, Geshev and Peevski – the main anti-heroes displayed on protestors' posters.

The onset of protests

The mass protests in Bulgaria started on 9 July 2020, demanding the resignation of the prime minister, Boyko Borissov, and the chief prosecutor, Ivan Geshev. The prime minister acted as the victor after the first stage of the COVID-19 crisis. His political ratings were rising while pro-government sociologists and commentators praised him profusely in the mainstream mass media owned by the oligarchs and in the service of Borissov (Tribune, 2020). Moreover, the chief prosecutor's office was gaining momentum to crush GERB's[3] political rivals and to assist in the takeover of businesses in favour of the circles around the government (Anti-Corruption Fund, 2020). It therefore seemed they would be on top forever.

The public, however, had witnessed that instead of preventing and combating crime, Ivan Geshev had, in fact, exerted pressure on opponents criticising the government.

According to the Bulgarian Constitution, the chief prosecutor is in the highest position in the structures of the Bulgarian state. Although Bulgaria's Constitutional Court amended the document stating the chief prosecutor could be the subject of a legal investigation, no prosecutor would use this possibility in a system fully controlled by those who had elected Ivan Geshev in the first place.

The chief prosecutor abused his power so provocatively and aggressively that it sparked outrage in professional circles. Being threatened and pressured by Ivan Geshev, President Rumen Radev came into open conflict with the government and the chief prosecutor, in the view of some, taking advantage of the protests.

The 2020 protests were not initiated by the president or the opposition, the Bulgarian Socialist Party, but by representatives of a small party outside of parliament, *Yes, Bulgaria*.[4] The event disrupted the comfort of those in power and plunged them to the brink of a political catastrophe threatening the government and losing its control over the prosecution and the judiciary.[5] Another group of protesters gathered around the so-called Poisonous Trio, middle-aged citizens claiming no political involvement before the parliamentary elections on 4 April 2021. They were engaged in providing information about the protest on social networks and social media, as well as organising civil unrest.

Activists from *Yes, Bulgaria*, led by former Justice Minister Hristo Ivanov, exposed the government's dependency on the Movement for Rights and Freedom,[6] causing mass outrage.[7]

Using methods and structures inherited from the totalitarian State Security Services, the MRF had a strong political influence even when not formally in power. An example of this relationship was provided by the fact that the MRF's Honorary Chairman Ahmed Dogan was responsible for the appointment of his close associate, Delyan Peevski, an oligarch and media owner, as the head of the National Security Agency, prompting the protests of 2013–2014.

A network of oligarchs had effectively established a parallel state in Bulgaria that exerted power through business, the judiciary, the media, the police and the

security apparatus. All this led to poverty and the increasing pauperisation of the society.

> While Bulgaria's parallel state is a complex web, Ivanov and the protesters are focusing their attention on the role of two prominent behind-the-scenes power brokers from the country's ethnic Turkish party: Ahmed Dogan, the party's former leader, and media mogul Delyan Peevski. . . . Borissov has been reluctant to challenge Dogan and Peevski, and the protesters are calling for his resignation partly because of his ties to the duo. . . . Borissov is king by day, Peevski is king by night.
>
> (Oliver, 2020)

Another example of state capture by the oligarchs was provided by the "beach incident" when Hristo Ivanov and Democratic Bulgaria activists tried to set foot on a public beach near Ahmed Dogan's summer residence. The live broadcast on Facebook showed how employees from the National Service for Protection guarded the private residence of the oligarch, constructed with regulatory privileges given by the central and local authorities.

The protesters demanded the withdrawal of Ahmed Dogan's state bodyguards, symbolising the dominance of private actors over the state. In addition, the protest was aimed at trying to make the space (not only on the beach) open to all citizens and thus a democratic space.

GERB showed their readiness to maintain their power and protect Dogan's comfort and convenience, even at the cost of civil disorder. Instructions to the police and gendarmerie not to allow anyone near the residence, made public by the media, caused indignation among the majority of Bulgarian society.

The series of events prompted massive protests in which thousands of people of all ages, different political views and various backgrounds participated, demanding the resignation of the government and the chief prosecutor.

Ivan Geshev became one of the main culprits responsible for the tension that had built up in society and a symbolic anti-hero attracting resentment from the citizens. In less than seven months at the helm of the state prosecutor's office, his brutal and openly political actions against opponents of the government and independent business representatives reduced the already-low authority of the prosecutor's office even further.

In a series of scandals with key people in the government, including the prime minister and the minister of finance, Geshev exposed himself even more by refusing to engage in scrutiny and investigations of alleged crimes of the oligarchs and state officials. Thus, the vast and uncontrolled power of the prosecutor's office turned out to be practical without any legitimacy. The figure of the chief prosecutor had, therefore, become the object of public contempt, ridicule and protest.

Consequently, a large number of young people came onto the streets. Students and academics from several universities also came out demanding the resignations

of the corrupt state officials, which resembled the academic activism in the protest occupation of Sofia University in 2013 (Barzachka and Yordanova, 2020).

Osman Oktay, an independent political analyst, called the young protesters "the children on their parents' shoulders" (Lazarov and Chervenkova, 2020), thus alluding to the protests of the 1990s when Bulgaria transitioned from the communist to the post-communist era.

The young generation, although not having experienced the communist regime directly, felt united with the older generations to fight for the country's liberation from destructive forces stemming from corrupt politicians and illegal business networks.

Effects of the protests

According to the protesters, the fictitious fight against corruption, the systematic violation of the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the violation of basic democratic principles and values were the main reasons for the protests. The dependence of mainstream media on the monopoly of oligarchs and multiple scandals at the highest level of the state authorities remained ignored by the prosecutor's office. As Nikolay Yordanov from the Faculty of Law at Sofia University stated:

> Most of us want to uncover our potential in Bulgaria, but also to do everything possible to make it happen in a productive, competitive environment, composed of staff who stand out with their professional and personal qualities when fighting for certain positions. As a full member of the European Union, we must do what is up to us, not be at the bottom of any statistics for the member states.
>
> (Lazarov and Chervenkova, 2020)

By this stage, prominent institutions such as the parliament, government and prosecutor's office had lost their legitimacy due to the lack of trust of the majority of Bulgarian society. This was expressed via protest actions to bring this to the attention of the European Commission and the member states of the European Union (EU).

Although the debate in the European Parliament on the rule of law in Bulgaria was stopped, the problem had already been emphasised on the international stage, providing hope for a constructive solution to the problems caused by the degeneration of the Bulgarian political class. Some promising initiatives were undertaken by foreign journalists and analysts writing in *Politico*, *Free Europe*, *Open Democracy* and so on. The influential magazine *Politico* was among the first to publish a direct and accurate article pointing out the responsibility of European leaders, including Angela Merkel, for closing their eyes to how Borissov had ruled Bulgaria for so long (Dzhambazova, 2020). In the following days, although

not with such directness, the American and French embassies in Sofia declared themselves supporting the legality and the right of Bulgarian citizens to protest. They were followed by a spokesman for the European Commission, who said that Bulgaria remained under the supervision of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism in the field of justice. Demonstrating good relations and support from EU and US leaders has always been key to the rule of Borissov, who had used it to bolster internal legitimacy. Although GERB was acceptable as part of the dominant political force in the European institutions, it could fall into isolation if the protests and foreign media publications continued to draw attention to how the EU's poorest country was governed.

The mass protests in Bulgaria drew the attention of the European Parliament (EP), which in stark contrast to the European Commission's slow response, adopted a resolution addressing the rule of law and breaches of fundamental human rights in Bulgaria. The document was critical concerning several issues, including the alleged corruption of Boyko Borissov and the Prosecutor's Office. This reaction of the EP also indicated that the European People's Party (EPP), from which Borissov benefitted, was withdrawing its support for him (Vassileva, 2020).

The reaction and feedback of EU countries and institutions were crucial in launching the process of restoring sound institutions and networks coping with challenges posed by severe violations of fundamental principles of the democratic system.

One of the crucial problems of the GERB's government was that it was no longer able to set the agenda for the country due to the fact that it had been deprived of real legitimacy over its citizens. Whatever tactics Borissov used – intimidation with talk of economic problems, bribery with promises of "European money" ("So far we have agreed on a lot of funds for Bulgaria and we just have to protect them") (Lazarov and Chervenkova, 2020), the political sacrificing of ministers and his dissociation from the MRF (Movement for Rights and Freedom), people openly demonstrated their lack of trust in his words.

The protests forced the state's agenda, starting with a claim that the whole government and the chief prosecutor had resigned since their stepping down was the precondition for establishing/restoring democratic order. The moment was fateful for Bulgaria for another reason – the outcome of the political crisis would determine the country's ability to effectively use the opportunities providing the EU reconstruction fund to manage the effects of the pandemic. Although the criteria and priorities for allocating the funds were still under negotiation, the main objectives were related to reforms serving economic development, digitalisation and a low-carbon economy.

The development of the protests would depend on many factors, inter alia, the reaction of Borissov and GERB, Chief Prosecutor Geshev, international institutions and the media. Last but not least, the pandemic and the economic crises would also co-shape public/general resentment and resistance to the government.

Newly elected political forces were obliged to take concrete steps for the planned normalisation and request a new social contract starting with the dismantling of the model that made the Geshev phenomenon possible.

Before the elections in April 2021, the "protest parties" clearly stated what they would do to restore the legitimacy of the state prosecutor's office, and hence that of the state government, which had been hijacked by the prosecutor's office. In this regard, the package of constitutional reforms proposed by Democratic Bulgaria provided an opportunity to unite all political parties that proclaimed support for the demands raised by the protesters.

The key steps included:

- the Supreme Judicial Council to be composed only of professional judges,
- the chief prosecutor to be elected by the parliament and by constitutional majority so that he/she was independent of the government,
- the prosecution should not be used as a tool against businesses and political opponents of the government.

These concepts, although taken for granted in well-established democracies, were uncommon in Bulgarian politics.

The elections

In April and July 2021, GERB, which had formed three governments since 2009, went into the election campaign weakened by the anti-governmental protests over large-scale corruption, a politicised judiciary and tightening control of the media. Its result came to 26% (April) and 23.5% (July) of the votes and the lack of support from any other party in the 45th and 46th parliament.

The big surprise of the elections was a new political party, headed by a TV talk show host and musician, Slavi Trifonov, achieving second place (Dichev, 2021). With nearly 18% (April) and 24% (July) support, Trifonov's ITN (*There is such a people*) displaced the Socialists (BSP) from the number 2 spot for the first time in 20 years.

Growing public support for ITN resulted from Trifonov's popularity due to his political performance and well-formatted messages addressed to the public, allowing one to combine strong criticism of the authorities with entertainment. As an actor and performer, he could attract public attention and support. What especially brought him many votes was the anti-corruption discourse and a referendum proposal to decrease state financing of political parties dramatically.

Two other opposition parties who criticised GERB's corruption and collusion with an organised crime made significant results due to a successful social mobilisation during the summer protests. Democratic Bulgaria got nearly 10% (April) and 12.6% (July), and a newcomer to the political scene, Rise Up, Bulgaria/Thugs Out, passed the 4% electoral threshold.

After an unsuccessful attempt to conduct political consultations and negotiations, GERB failed to form a government, as did the following two largest parliamentary groups. The "protest parties" (There is such a people, Democratic Bulgaria and Rise Up, Bulgaria/Thugs Out) failed to unite in the name of stable governance, which led to the dissolution of the 45th and 46th parliaments.

The president appointed a caretaker government to operate with limited capacity without a legislature until the election of a regular government. To prevent unfair elections, the 45th National Assembly managed to adopt changes to the election code, some of which included 100% machine voting and video surveillance during the vote count at the end of election day. This was a reason to hope for a fair election process and better prospects for Bulgaria's future despite rising populism and highly fragmented political representation.

In the elections on 4 April and 11 July 2021, a solid vote against the ten-year status quo was pronounced. The leading parties until then, namely GERB and United Patriots, the BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) and the MRF (Movement for Rights and Freedom), lost hundreds of thousands of votes and weakened their political potential; in case of the latter demoting them to become a behind-the-scenes operator. Evidently, these three parties had been severely hit by the withdrawal of public trust and vote. At the same time, the "protest parties" failed to unite around a common goal and form a coalition government. Although the status quo seemed to have been stopped, there were no political forces capable of introducing the necessary changes to move Bulgaria towards democracy.

Although Democratic Bulgaria was the only one of the so-called protest parties with a programme and a vision and talked about introducing urgent reforms in Bulgarian political life, it did not have the electoral power to undertake these steps. Despite the political deadlock, the representatives of the protest parties met and agreed to create a shared network of volunteers – observers of the election process to monitor the parliamentary vote. Thus, in September 2021, a new centrist anti-corruption alliance, *We Continue the Change*, was formed. In the next elections on 14 November 2021, the protest parties won enough seats to lead Bulgaria to a different, more democratic stage. The new ruling coalition was constituted of We Continue the Change (25%), the Bulgarian Socialist Party (10%), There is such a people (9.3%) and Democratic Bulgaria (6.3%). The civic platform Rise Up, Bulgaria, one of the three organisers of the anti-government protests (the former "Poisonous Trio"), did not pass the 4% threshold on this occasion.

Towards democracy

The peaceful protests have affected government leaders showing a profound and genuine connection with the idea of democracy. The dismantling of the viciously corrupted political model of Bulgaria required a mass national mobilisation, which went through the formation of a parliamentary majority in favour of a radical change of those occupying positions in the judiciary and the security services.

The changing of this model started with citizens' protests that, consequently, had been organised before and during the presidential elections. The protests were a clear sign given by the growing public awareness of the fundamental procedures and rules of a democratic country. Being a member of the European Union obliged one to follow high democratic standards, which, in the case of Bulgaria, had not been kept. This met no acceptance from a civil society that felt its strength and

took to the streets, removing the mandate for any corrupt and populist party, such as the GERB coalition with the United Patriots, meaning national populist parties.

Voters who supported the change transferred their expectations to new faces, new figures and new programmes with transparent, democratic values.

The protests of 2020–2021 consisted of opponents of the old post-communist model of power, which had degenerated into an amalgamation between institutions, oligarchs and the media.

The protest culture in Bulgaria, although still fragile and in the process of formation (if one considers the country's history), constitutes one of the core values of the majority of society (Daino, 2020).

By November 2021, the desire for protest and overall political energy in the country was markedly low after the appointment of a coalition government. However, many people would take to the streets again at the first opportunity in search of their still unfulfilled request for the resignation of the chief prosecutor, Ivan Geshev, symbolising the state capture by oligarchs. The protests brought some success: the weakening of Geshev's position and the removal of Boyko Borissov from the political scene.

Nevertheless, as in 2022, the issue of the rule of law remained. The institution of the chief prosecutor, formatted in an anti-democratic way, allows one to usurp key functions of justice, initiate arbitrary prosecutions and to violate one's right to a fair trial, all to the benefit of the oligarchs.

Changing the constitutional norms affecting the chief prosecutor's office would be a prerequisite for fighting corruption. Although the change can be made in several ways, it will be successful if it removes the dependence of members of the Supreme Judicial Council on the chief prosecutor, significantly reduces their term and introduces an effective mechanism for the removal from office of individuals who violate the democratic law. It may also include establishing a special procedure and a special institution, not subordinate to the chief prosecutor, to prosecute senior magistrates.

In 2020 and 2021, the protests launched the unification of the up-to-then scattered potential of Bulgarian society. By contesting the elections, this society also found the answer to how and to what extent the energy of the protests could be capitalised politically.

It is still difficult to say, however, whether the resources of the union of the "protest parties" and the Bulgarian socialists would be sufficient to carry out deep systemic changes.

Although the Poisonous Trio gained many supporters through organising its months-long civic campaign, it was not enough to win seats in parliament. Despite the We Continue the Change movement being a significant part of the protest, many protesters followed it by supporting their old party affiliations. Moreover, Democratic Bulgaria, which had been the most consistent critic of the violation of the rule of law in the country and which gave a serious impetus to the protests with its actions in Rosenets, gradually lost its political influence.

After a series of elections in 2021, President Rumen Radev took the helm of power – first with caretaker governments – then with simultaneous presidential

and new parliamentary elections in November 2021, in which he won a second term as the unifier of "everyone against GERB."

Through the protests, most Bulgarian citizens have shown political maturity and civic solidarity, devoting their time and energy to exercising their rights to free expression, peaceful assembly and participation in public life (Vassileva, 2020).

While protesters refrained from formulating demands beyond Borissov's and Geshev's resignations, other political actors, guided by their understandings and programmes, were already modelling the discourse of the future. In the media, radical anti-systemic slogans could be heard as "the complete disintegration of the system," "the immediate and total change of the model," "the convening of a Grand National Assembly for an entirely new constitution," and "a complete restart of all public relations."

There were also suggestions that the transition from communism to democracy since 1989 was a mistake that needed corrections. These sentiments did not take into account that along with serious problems affecting the functioning of Bulgarian democracy, the foundations of the liberal-democratic legal order were laid after 1989. Thus, what needed to be dismantled was not the system nor the institutions of liberal democracy but the oligarchic-mafia appropriation of the state.

A vision of Bulgaria as a fully democratic country is high on the agenda of the anti-corruption protesters. This includes upholding democracy, respecting human rights, the rule of democratic law and maintaining Bulgaria's European orientation. The protesters are eager not to allow the still-unconsolidated Bulgarian democracy to be degraded and pushed along the path of becoming an authoritarian, anti-democratic regime. This requires elimination with targeted political means of the overall oligarchisation of political and economic life by permanent "players" (political parties, lobbyists, illegal businesses etc.).

An environment of imprecise market mechanisms and ineffectively controlled flow of money at the state and local level allow oligarchs to accumulate power, wealth and privileges. To end this dysfunctional system would require following strict rules outlined in, inter alia, the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the European Pillar of Social Rights. This is particularly important for overcoming the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the socio-economic crisis it triggered. Any attempt to exacerbate socio-economic injustice by those in power may trigger a series of new protests. As the phenomena discussed in this chapter have shown, there is plenty of determination, will and power in Bulgarian society to become aware of its rights and aspire to become a genuine civil society.

Notes

1 These persons are presented in other parts of this chapter.
2 The communist ruling class (nomenklatura) were a category of people within the Eastern Bloc countries who held various key administrative positions in the bureaucracy, running all spheres of those countries' activity: government, industry, education etc., whose

positions were granted only with approval by the Communist Party of each state or region.

3 *Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria* (GERB) is the ruling party with its leader, the prime minister, Boyko Borissov. It forms a coalition with the *United Patriots* (national populist parties).

4 *Yes, Bulgaria*, *Democrats for strong Bulgaria* (DSB) and the *Green Movement* form the coalition *Democratic Bulgaria*. Although combating corruption and the desire to reform the judiciary system unite *Democratic Bulgaria*, the parties within the coalition are very different in some respects. DSB is a conservative and Christian democratic party; the *Green Movement* is an ecological party, although not as much to the left on the spectrum as the European Greens; *Yes, Bulgaria* prefers to avoid ideological determination and rather insists on fighting corruption as its main value. And even though *Yes, Bulgaria* was the initiator of the protest, there is no evidence that the coalition *Democratic Bulgaria* drew the benefits from the civil unrest because its electoral support is insignificant.

5 Guards from the National Service for Protection forbade the opposition leader Hristo Ivanov and his supporters to go ashore near Rosenets though the beach is public land. The residence of a former party leader who is part of the status quo is located there. For details of this incident, see the next page.

6 Members of the movement [Movement for Rights and Freedom] are the majority of ethnic Turks, Pomaks and a smaller proportion of Muslim Roma population. The party has an authoritarian structure and is controlled by Honorary Chairman Ahmed Dogan. A former State Security agent during totalitarianism, Dogan takes pride in the so-called Bulgarian ethnic model, or in other words, the fact that Bulgaria did not have a Yugoslavia-type war.

7 Hristo Ivanov and his supporters tried to dock their boat on a beach (Rosenets) where Ahmed Dogan's summer residence is located. They were stopped by guards from the National Service for Protection without any legal basis. Although the beach is public land, access to it is restricted for Dogan's own comfort and convenience.

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Chapter 5

Crisis of capitalism and its effect on voters' attitudes in the Western world*

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Introduction

Globalisation is not an entirely new phenomenon. Some have traced its genesis to the early 16th century with the advent of geographical discoveries and long-distance trade (Braudel, 1973) while others locate it at the birth of the industrial revolution and celebrate the period between 1870 and the outbreak of the First World War as the golden age of globalisation (Hirst and Thompson, 2002). Protest against these waves came in different forms, suffice to mention mercantilism and economic nationalism or the collapse of the gold standard. Nevertheless, for most analysts, globalisation is a modern-day phenomenon that also captures production beyond commodity exchange (Gereffi, 2005). Globalisation can have many definitions; it "may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (Held et al., 1999, p. 2), including in the economic sphere. Importantly, globalisation is (much) more than internationalisation as the latter simply assumes the extension of economic activities of nation-states across borders, while the former assumes a "functional integration between internationally dispersed activities" (Dicken, 2004, p. 12).

Thus, in "economic terms globalisation is nothing but a process making the world economy an 'organic system' by extending transnational economic processes and economic relations to more and more countries and by deepening the economic interdependencies among them" (Szentes, 2003, p. 69). Globalisation in an economy can, therefore, be interpreted more on a qualitative than on a quantitative basis. It is a full-fledged structural transformation of the economy which then also calls for adjustments in the different layers of society. Such an adjustment, however, requires citizens to change their habits, attitudes and how they organise and live their personal lives.

With all these challenges, a new global economic order (for "economic order," see Gilpin, 1975) has been emerging along globalisation with its all cultural, political and social dimensions (Gopinath, 2008), encompassing economic structures coined in the academic literature as "post-Fordist," as it has transcended the Fordist nature of mass production (Jessop, 2002).

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Global capitalism has been shrinking into recession or sluggish growth, exploiting the labour force without providing shelter for them while the interdependencies within global capitalism have not proved to be a hotbed of cooperation initiatives. However, in a landscape of secret collusions and open (political or military) conflicts, the global economic order has lost its credibility and attractiveness. The plain or hidden hostility against the global economic order – that is, cultural globalisation, modernisation and economic integration – has triggered anti-globalist *protest movements*. The present chapter aims to scrutinise how and why these protest movements do not fit into traditional ideational strands of politics (i.e., liberalism, socialism or conservatism) while not finding a stable ideational shelter under new, alternative (anti-globalist) strands of liberalism, socialism and conservatism. The first section of the chapter approaches it from the demand side, namely from the side of (bottom-up) protest movements. In contrast, the second section investigates the same question from the supply side, that is, from the side of ideational movements.

In the first section, two protest movements (from Ireland and France, respectively) are presented as case studies, highlighting their spontaneous bottom-up and non-ideological character, concluding that protests are liable to point at the "egoistic heart" of the global economic order painfully without any remarkable ideational framing – at least one not rooted in distinct modern political ideologies.

In the second section, a taxonomy of pro- and anti-globalist ideational strands are compared, casting light on how unfairness-focused crisis awareness has been articulating along issues that intersect the traditional conservative–liberal–left ideologies. Hence, the internal coherence of these ideologies has been deteriorating. However, the various anti-globalist ideational movements tend to bear the political legacy, or burden, of modern political ideologies of socialism, liberalism or conservatism, whose ideational self-limitation does not allow them to adopt flexibility to current crises and to meet the demand of protest movements ideologically, insisting on an already incoherent and exclusionary political lingo.

Apart from summarising these findings in the conclusion, we put forward a possible political consequence, according to which those political movements will be capable of gathering anti-globalist protesters while representing some branches of liberal, socialist or conservative ideational strands in their complementarity.

The demand side: unfairness-focused crisis awareness

This section attempts to offer an analysis of how the crisis of global capitalism – more precisely, globalisation backlash – can alter the demand level in politics, that is, the voters' attitude. Logically, neither supply nor demand can be divided from each other in practice as distinctively as in theory. However, theoretically, voter demand and elite supply can be depicted as autonomous spheres of politics, albeit ones developing in a permanent interrelatedness between each other.

The proliferation of global value chains, the success of multilateralism under the WTO and the spread of regional integration forms such as the EU have contributed to a massive lowering of tariffs (and non-tariff measurements) worldwide since the 1980s, a process that was magnified by the entering of China into the WTO on 11 December 2001. In one of the first studies on the local labour market impact of Chinese imports (the so-called Chinese shock), Autor et al. (2013) detected a direct relationship between increases in imports from China, on the one hand, and increased unemployment, decreased labour market participation and decline in wages in those American districts where manufacturing had provided living for most. According to them, import competition explained one-quarter of the aggregate decline in manufacturing employment in the United States. Pierce and Schott (2016) confirmed their findings, noting that US manufacturing employment suffered considerable losses due to the changed tariff policy of the US government on Chinese imports.

Within the context of US legislation, Feigenbaum and Hall (2015) found that the economic shock emanating from Chinese imports caused legislators to behave strategically by endorsing protective trade bills. Nevertheless, the Chinese shock was also felt in Western Europe, causing substantial job polarisation (Goos et al., 2014). The global financial and economic crisis of 2008 proved to be a game changer. Import tariffs, the initiation of trade wars and the attacks on multilateralism and its institutions have become the typical responses to the frustration of people who have either lost or feared losing their jobs and their previous standard of living. Analysing policy changes concerning, for instance, cross-border trade, investment and labour migration between 2017 and 2019, Evenett and Fritz (2019) found that trade protectionism has become more pronounced than ever in the last few decades. However, world trade has been slowing for a longer period now: this slowdown started before the global economic and financial crisis as a structural change in the trade-to-GDP relationship emerged, triggered by a slowing down of vertical specialisations worldwide (Constantinescu et al., 2020).

If globalisation is indeed a "complex, indeterminate set of processes operating very unevenly in both time and space" (Dicken, 2004, p. xv), then it necessarily brings about insecurity in people's everyday lives as the distributional consequences of globalisation are evidently indeterminate too. Insecurity and indeterminacy, in turn, can naturally invoke discontent, frustration and anxiety, which might eventually trigger actual protest – in terms of both protest votes (against the mainstream parties and party structures) and violent actions. In the EU, crisis-induced economic insecurity (especially the loss of employment) is responsible for weakening trust in political institutions, both domestically and at the European level (Algan et al., 2017). Fitting the general scholarly trend, although this narrative is certainly not blind to the effects of globalisation, it identifies the 2008 global financial crisis and the 2010 European debt crisis as the main triggering factors. The deficit of trust concerning institutions is also emphasised by Dustmann et al. (2017), arguing that popular discontent and especially the

rise of the share of the populist vote has been the dual manifestation of economic insecurity and identity crisis (migration in particular) in Europe. In a similar tone, Guiso et al. (2017) found the role of systemic crises significant in the intensification of economic insecurity in the EU, underlining that traditional parties on the left and the right were simply unable to tackle new challenges. They argue that neither left-wing parties urging more state intervention nor right-wing movements calling for a freer market could effectively and adequately address systemic crises.

It is no surprise that economic insecurity, triggered and amplified by globalisation (Guiso et al., 2017), has pushed many governments worldwide to provide shelter for their domestic employees in the form of increased tariffs and/or by urging domestic employers to abstain from outsourcing their activities to foreign locations eventually (Cerrato et al., 2018; Feigenbaum and Hall, 2015). Former US President Donald Trump provides certainly not the only example of deliberate actions taken to provide shelter for the people against the (alleged) abrupt consequences of free trade. In addition, the relatively long list of Latin American protectionists (Edwards, 2010), the policies of right-wing populists such as Thaksin Shinawatra (Thailand), Narendra Modi (India), Rodrigo Duterte (the Philippines) or Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey) can also serve as prime examples for trade protectionism. In turn, Funke et al. (2020) concluded in their synthetic control analysis that import tariffs were significantly higher under populist rule.

This finding evidently goes against the so-called compensation hypothesis. Originally, Cameron (1978) advocated the view that import exposure in developed economies made left-wing parties benefit from the dissatisfaction of the losers of globalisation. These losers typically demand more social protection, which, in turn, is nurtured by more generous welfare state provisions. In advanced economies, however, it has not been left-wing but rather right-wing populism that managed to capitalise on anti-globalisation sentiments. These populists offered no income compensation but job security in the form of limited import competition in the United States (Cerrato et al., 2018), more so because the earlier experience of promised ex-post compensations of free trade agreements did not materialise in the country. Furthermore, people are typically more frustrated because international exchange often favours countries that violate those norms and principles which are internalised by domestic players in advanced economies; in turn, "what arouses popular opposition is not inequality per se, but perceived unfairness" (Rodrik, 2018).

This "perceived unfairness" seems to be a suitable keyword for why anti-globalist protest sentiment does not prove to be leftish *par excellence* since anti-globalist protest sentiment is more complex and socio-psychologically deeper than focusing on economic inequality. Empirical research findings could also confirm this statement. Autor et al. (2017) showed that the increased Chinese imports added to the electoral success of Republicans as the Chinese shock, having been most intense in regions with low levels of education, caused a loss of votes for the Democrats in rural areas of the United States: that is, trade exposure was immediately translated into protest in terms of votes. Not surprisingly, increased

export activity, on the other hand, was paired with an increased vote share for the Democrats. In turn, the effect of Chinese imports (and economic globalisation, in general) on Western European party competition was analysed by Colantone and Stanig (2018), who found that import shocks contributed to making nationalist, isolationist and extreme right-wing parties more favourable at times of elections. By studying Germany, Dippel et al. (2015) found a positive relationship between globalisation (and the international division of labour in particular) and the rise of the extreme right. Extreme right-wing populism gained strength in regions more exposed to import competition. Brexit was also directly linked to the Chinese shock as people, having faced increased economic insecurity, blamed the EU for its single market, which did not manage to provide shelter for vulnerable segments of British society (Colantone and Stanig, 2018).

In lieu of a strong and relatively benevolent social safety net, losers of market integration can easily turn against the institutions and propagators of globalisation. Moreover, there are parties which, in turn, are ready to supply programmes that reject free trade and free market mechanisms (Guiso et al., 2017). However, as we can see, these are not the traditional conservative parties that could gather voters fleeing liberalism and socialism. Although this question will be investigated in the second section, beforehand, two case studies attempt to portray how bottom-up protest actions tend to be inconsistent with one single ideological strand, remaining ideologically "homeless" movements. They have evolved not just as anti-government but as anti-establishment movements while they have denied fuelling existing far- and extreme political strands.

The Irish anti-austerity protests

The Irish anti-austerity protests gained organised forms as part of the Occupy movements in the EU as a response to the crisis itself and the management of it. Ireland experienced record high growth rates of over 7% annually during the 1990s and 2000s, an era that earned it the label "Celtic Tiger," making the country the third richest economy in the EU on a per capita basis. The Irish success story started after a series of fiscal adjustment programmes from 1987 to 1989. One of the novelties of the consolidation efforts was the reliance on expenditure cuts instead of tax increases. At that time, the government could implement its harsh spending cuts policies with the help of trade unions and employers by negotiating the so-called social pacts, a method that was copied and followed by many countries later.

Nevertheless, the splendid economic performance happened to feed a real estate bubble along with a dramatic jump in bank lending, mainly in the form of mortgages. The 2008 global financial and economic crisis found the Irish banking sector in a weak and vulnerable position and forced the government to recapitalise the banking sector, fuelling the public debt to a dramatic high of 110% of GDP (from a record low level of 23%). Following years of spectacular growth rates, Ireland sank into recession in 2008 and experienced one of the most severe economic crises of its modern-day history, with an annual GDP growth rate averaging

at −1.75% between 2008 and 2011. Unemployment quickly jumped to over 15%, and emigration strengthened substantially; almost half a million people left the country in just half a decade. Labour market deterioration was dramatic since even substantial wage cuts did not prevent unemployment from rising. More than half of wage earners experienced some level of wage cuts at the height of the crisis (Doris et al., 2013).

The collapse of the banking sector not only made Ireland one of the first victims of the crisis, but it also invited the tutelage of "the Troika," namely the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF, in 2010. By that time, students, pensioners, civil servants, police officers, farmers and taxi drivers protested against the austerity measures of the incumbent coalition. In November 2010, one of the biggest marches was organised by trade unions in the history of Ireland, with a massive presence of over 100,000 people. From 2011 onwards, the so-called Occupy movements emerged in several towns countrywide and organised marches and protests against the economic measures that were planned to target the needy such as students, working-class people and pensioners.

Despite the relative strength of the austerity protests, alternating governments did not turn away from implementing austerity. As opposed to Greece, for instance, Ireland was, in fact, the poster boy of economic adjustment initiated by the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF. Ireland had successfully left behind the Troika's adjustment programme by 2013. Moreover, a positive growth rate was subsequently measured in 2014. It seemed that rigorous adjustment had paid out in both economic and political terms – just as in 1987–1989. Nevertheless, the protest movements did not halt; just the opposite, they received a new impetus due to the planned privatisation of the water supply along with a seemingly minor economic issue, namely the adoption of an extra tax on water consumption. In the autumn of 2014, 100,000 people gathered on the streets of Dublin and over 200,000 nationwide. Following a series of extraordinarily tough fiscal measures as part of the adjustment programme right after the outbreak of the crisis, it was felt by Irish citizens that the government had gone just too far by placing an extra burden on ordinary citizens instead of taxing the wealthy. The Right2Water campaign was established, and barricades were erected all around the country, organising more than 200 protests countrywide (Dunphy, 2017). Residents refused to allow water meters to be installed or to pay the extra tax. By 2015, the protests' intensity declined substantially; nevertheless, the government suspended water charges in 2016 as part of the incoming coalitions' electoral promise. It is important to note that 2015 was also the year when Irish GDP increased by 26% as a result of large multinational companies moving to Ireland due to its low corporate tax regime. The annual growth rate stood above 8% even in 2017 and 2018, making Ireland once again the star performer of the EU.

The Yellow Vests movement

A more recent protest movement, the Yellow Vests, which evolved well after the global financial crisis, was originally born in the form of a petition against extra

charges on fuel signed by over a million people in 2018. By November, the grassroots movement had become a more general protest reaction to the "unjust" market and social reforms that had been carried out from the end of 2017 onwards by Emmanuel Macron. These reforms included the highly contradictory suspension of the solidarity tax on wealthy people or the tightening of unemployment benefits and healthcare provision which, in turn, mobilised hundreds of thousands of people. Macron was displayed in these demonstrations as the president of the rich and the enemy of the hardworking middle class (Chamorel, 2019).

In November 2018, over a quarter million protesters gathered on the streets of small- and medium-sized towns as people in the suburbs felt the charges on fuel as an unfair extra tax on all those who lived far away from their place of work and were forced to commute daily. The extra charges hit the lower middle-class peri-urban families the most as transportation costs normally comprise a massive part of such families' budget. A tax increase on fuel, therefore, had an immediate effect on both the labour market and the housing market and affected social mobility (Blavier, 2021). Road blockades followed, and people in high-visibility yellow vests occupied roundabouts both in the countryside and, later, in Paris. The gatherings were repeated every week (on Saturdays) and often triggered violent reactions from the police. The Yellow Vests movement and the associated demonstrations soon became the symbol of an antagonistic relationship between the small, disappointed people, often without jobs, on the one hand, and the wealthy upper class on the other hand. As it evolved into a wide-scale mass movement, it also became an overt protest against the elite, most of all Macron and his government.

Most commentators interpreted the Yellow Vests movement as a symptom of the crisis of the political system (and the mainstream parties themselves) in France but also in Europe (see Grossman, 2019; Kipfer, 2019) and emphasised its high visibility and quasi-success without the traditional organisational bases (such as parties or trade unions) (Royall, 2020). In the theory of producerism by Ivaldi and Mazzoleni (2019), a concept that antagonises the relationship between producers and the unproductive classes, also called parasites (Berlet and Lyons, 2000), these Yellow Vests protesters were the hardworking but impoverished labourers. Although they had managed to bring about (the bulk of) economic prosperity in their country, they were barely rewarded accordingly. In fact, as the bottom half, they had been betrayed or ignored by the elite and faced serious existential challenges in their everyday lives. In turn, the classic left-right dividing line did not work any longer under such circumstances (Guerra et al., 2019). "[T]hey were aggrieved by the unequal and unjust wealth distribution of the growing French economy and felt deprived compared to their compatriots who did enjoy the fruits of the economy" (Schultziner and Kornblit, 2020, p. 537).

The supply side: the shattered nature of liberalism, socialism and conservatism

Being aware of the diverging strands within the research programme on the development of modern political ideologies, this second section of this chapter

attempts to examine the ideational transformation under the crisis of globalisation, focusing on the question of how the internal coherence of socialism, liberalism and conservatism has been affected – that is, shattered along new cleavages – by "globalisation conflict" (Zürn and de Wilde, 2016). Before embarking on this section, the concept of "internal coherence" needs to be clarified: by this term, we mean the coherence between their ideational objectives, which can complement, or, as a stronger entanglement, reinforce each other (Freeden, 1996; Steger, 2008). However, it is important to note beforehand that there has never been any perfect ideological coherence in the course of the history of modern political thinking; most influential "mass ideologies" such as socialism, liberalism and conservatism – formulating together the subject of the present scrutinisation – can be rather depicted as a pool of somewhat different theoretical schools, as well as political practices (Zürn and de Wilde, 2016). However, within the ideology morphologies – that is, discourses formulated around ideologies, also implying academic, political and public discourses (Steger and Wilson, 2012) – some underlying principles have been crystallised, logically related to each other. Thus, as a whole, they provide socialism, liberalism and conservatism with a coherent ideational structure.

Although the ideology of socialism in the 19th century emerged as a critique of the capitalist mode of production, it did not question the existence of capitalism and even considered it a necessary stage/station on the historical path to an idealist socialist society. Socialism regarded the capitalist mode of production – in which market exchange is complemented by hierarchical, bureaucratic coordination – as an impersonal/alienated structure of dominance over the working class maintained by the capitalist class while struggling to change this structure primarily through state ownership and stately regulated exchange or redistribution mechanisms (Mitchell and Fazi, 2017). The ideology of the left thus presupposes the prevailing existence of class structures. Nevertheless, post-Fordist production and consumption relations eventually show the contrary. Employees' class consciousness has been weakened as a dense network of personal relations in the labour market has evolved, where employees' individual work experiences and their attitude towards personal cooperation with employers and clients – as a form of their accumulated social capital – can promise more career opportunities, even if along a "patchwork career" and fewer collective conflicts (Castells, 1996; Beck, 2000). Under late-modern knowledge-based "cognitive capitalism," the former working class has been disintegrated (DiPrete et al., 1997) to "insiders," embedded in the corporate world as part of a technostructure and "outsiders," coined in the literature as the "precariat." All these societal shifts have placed the coherence of earlier left ideology under question, as the occupational classes to be represented could not be absorbed into its organic unity – while the various modes of social inequality clearly remained (Mills et al., 2008).

Leftish ideational strands proved to respond to this challenge in two distinctly diverging ways: insisting on the importance of the collective and conflicting struggle against already globally interconnected capital interests, and hence formulating strong anti-globalist attitudes, or, on the contrary, accustoming one to

the global economic order and offering its structure as a pathway of social mobility. Along this cleavage within the left-oriented ideational domain, anti-globalist political thoughts – grouped under such umbrella terms as the New Left or the global justice movement (Steger and Wilson, 2012) – aim to achieve the elimination of supposed hidden or manifest inequalities, assuming that various disadvantaged groups – women, immigrants, declassified social groups, workers under precarious conditions – need global advocacy.

In contrast, streams antithetical to the above-outlined anti-globalist thoughts are also rooted in modern socialist ideology. The "Third Way," commonly associated with Anthony Giddens or Tony Blair, has "reconciled" itself with globalisation (Giddens, 1998; Powell, 2000). It depicted the global economic order not as an obstacle but as an opportunity for societies through which career ambitions, social mobility, and emancipation goals can be achieved in a rather fundamentally individualistic way (Leggett, 2010). According to this approach, transnationalised structures of public life, international organisations and global market institutions provide a suitable background/platform within which successful social convergence can be regarded as the derivation of myriads of individual efforts. Hence, the task of politics seems not to contend/fight with the actors of the global economic order for the sake of a working class – that no longer exists in its organic unity – but to provide inclusive opportunities for individual ambitions and mobility struggles (Le Grand, 1998; Lister, 1999). What is reminiscent of the former left ideologies in Third-Way politics is primarily prioritising emancipatory aspirations, equal opportunities and declaring respect for individual dignity and accountability in social relations. To achieve this goal, politics no longer necessarily provides a direct strategy/tool but rather provides guidance (e.g., Miliband, 1994: "preventive welfare") – that is why Third-Way politics can be called pure "verbalism" with a critical overtone (Schlett, 2010).

To recapitulate the above sections, if we scrutinise the development of socialism concerning globalisation, both pro- and anti-globalist strands – such as the Third Way and the New Left – can be interpreted as reminiscent of left-wing ideology under the "pressure" of the global economic order, splitting into such ideational visions that have lost much in coherence: the depiction of the present by these strands provides rather an "inclusionary populism" (Markou, 2017), declaring the need for general solidarity to take advantage of globalisation or to contend with it, without formulating an easily comprehensible and clear-cut political strategy (Powell, 2000).

The same conclusion can be drawn regarding liberalism. Classical liberalism in the 19th century represented an outstandingly harmonious concept concerning the importance of both political and economic emancipation of individual *citoyens*, extending their rights/freedom both in the economy and in public life. The dilemma that there might be a perplexing contradiction between freedom of entrepreneurship and freedom of consumers as well as labourers – citizens as a whole – has been becoming increasingly apparent in the course of market oligopolisation and monopolisation processes. This ideational cleavage was uncovered at

a relatively early stage of modern political thinking (Cerny, 2016) as a possible dividing line between preaching the sacredness of market freedom and seeking to control markets precisely for human rights reasons. In the second half of the 20th century, liberalism became already sharply divided along this cleavage, as representatives of economic liberalism went further and – with an optimistic belief in the emerging global economic order – continued to adhere to the principle of the minimal state, considering emerging social imbalances and unequal opportunities, either temporary or traced back to external causes, such as harmful political activities. While this pro-globalist neoliberal answer has become a kind of mainstream and "common sense" among economic policymakers, resulting in the deregulation of trade and investments (Stiglitz, 2002), anti-globalist liberalism is something that can be hardly described on the level of policies and remained much more fluid than the anti-globalist left. Nevertheless, it exists, for instance, as academic formulations such as "progressive populism" (see Kuttner, 2018, for describing policymaking regarding fundamental civil rights against global capitalism) or cosmopolitanism (see Zürn and de Wilde, 2016, for describing cultural liberalism opposing the logic of economic cores and peripheries).

Last but not least, the development of, or rift in, modern conservatism in late-modern societies can also be traced back to contending rival responses to the challenges posed by the global economic order. Conservative political thinking envisioned moderated social progress following customs and norms rooted in the past, where the institutional regimes shaped by societies are not barriers to the improvement of society but necessary frameworks. This kind of classical conservatism can be called pessimistic in some respects – it does not believe that progressive top-down social agendas initiated by pioneers are successfully embeddable or can overcome human fallibility. However, it can be proclaimed as an elitist idea, as it did not urge the abolition of existing hierarchies. Lastly, it can be called a collectivist ideology because it interprets existing social communities as an organic basis of political practice (Kirk, 1953). Conservatism thus became both a representative of the *nation* as a community and a defender of existing *institutional regimes* – a set of norms, customs, and even hierarchical, bureaucratic structures. These two politico-philosophical ends/claims – nation and institutional order – functioned more or less as complementary principles until the emergence of global economic order and its supranational institutional regimes, such as international economic policy organisations or institutional fields of transnational production and consumption. This broad category includes not only transnational companies but also the strategic networks they operate and global consumerism as a consumer norm in which the "national market" is embedded. Triggered by this challenge, conservatism – similarly to left and liberal ideologies – has split towards two opposite answers. Strands prioritising the national community as a political end keep emphasising the importance of its traditional values – and already warn one against the existing institutional orders and regimes, proving to be detrimental to nations as unities of the polity. This kind of "new right" has therefore become a proponent of anti-institutionalist – that is, personalist, leader-centred – politics (Körösényi et al., 2020). In addition, as the global economic

order has been gradually institutionalising and its customs and norms have been partly embedded within societies, having already some certain traditional legitimacy, new-right movements and thoughts are likely to claim charismatic legitimacy (e.g., of their leading political personalities). This is something which had not originally been part of modern conservatism (Przeworski, 2019). It is worth reiterating here that this late-modern ideational spin of modern conservative political thinking – labelled as new right, alt-right or neotraditionalist – had its own earlier predecessors when the dilemma of nation versus order had emerged under certain circumstances. The academic term "decisionist conservatism" covers strands emphasising the priority of potent decision-making and questioning the passivism of earlier mainstream conservatism.

Besides, another conservative response to the challenge of globalisation has evolved into the neoconservative apotheosis of "order," envisioning a kind of global economy obeying a globally adopted hierarchical stabilitocracy – with a "reasonable" Anglo-Saxon hegemony, as a consequence of organic path-dependency of international relations, after winning two world wars and the Cold War (Kristol, 1995; Drury, 1997). From this perspective, neoconservatism has proved to be an Anglo-Saxon ideational sequel of conservatism; however, it has its local satellites and followers throughout the world.

A comprehensive review of the above-outlined shattered nature of these strands is depicted in Table 5.1, highlighting how pro-globalist left, neoliberalism and neoconservatism have been drifting close to each other, becoming difficult to distinguish. At the same time, anti-globalist thoughts and movements have problems attaching themselves to each other and finding overlaps, as well complementarities, thanks to the different ideational legacies they insist on. Although it would be exceptionally interesting to scrutinise the status of in-between categories of ordoliberalism and social democracy, the focus of our attention is now how some spontaneous bottom-up anti-globalist protest movements can be placed on this map of political ideologies.

Table 5.1 Ideational strands and their relation to globalisation

	antiglobalism	**technocratic globalism**	**pro-globalism**
Left-oriented	New Left	Social Democracy	Third Way
Liberal-oriented	Progressive populism / Cosmopolitanism	Ordoliberalism	Neoliberalism
		Ordoliberalism	Neoconservatism
Right-oriented	New Right		

Conclusion

As we can see, a historical analysis of 21st-century political ideas can lead one to the conclusion that their internal coherence has deteriorated by the emergence of the global economic order: emerging new ideological directions (such as the New Left, the Third Way, neoliberalism and neoconservatism or the alt-right) can be regarded as somewhat desperate and contradictory ideational responses along the new cleavages of "globalisation conflict." Hence, they cannot respond to the crisis of globalisation in such a form as gathering, structuring and representing the protest sentiment. By and large, the common characteristics of protesters were their relatively modest income levels, low-level educational profile, lower middle-class status, hostility towards ordinary politics (inclusive of the traditional party structure) and robust demand for more redistribution, specifically for higher minimum wages (Grossman, 2019). They had a precarious career path and a low level of political socialisation. They were the most exposed to the negative effects of globalisation and especially job replacement and were forced to face a constant decline in their social status. Most of them were complete newcomers without any prior experience in protest movements (Reungoat et al., 2020). Although a heterogeneous set of people, it was their highly negative experience that bound them together:

> [e]xperience of not being able to make ends meet when they feel that they do all they can to avoid being dependent on others, including the state and its welfare benefits, which they see as humiliating handouts . . . In their world, politics is before everything else a method of maintaining social dignity for everyone and the economy a means to that political end.
>
> (Lianos, 2019)

Nevertheless, their street-level protest movements were not able or willing to embed themselves into anti-globalist ideational strands, showing a kind of discrepancy between the strong potential of the former to move people and flawed potential of the latter to frame these movements.

A possible answer to this situation is provided by the second section of the chapter, highlighting the path-dependent embeddedness of anti-globalist political thoughts into old-modern political ideologies, keeping them distant from each other, despite their strong actual overlaps. As a consequence, ideational movements and their symbols – slogans, labels and narratives – tend to fail to provide a cognitive frame to protest movements, which could have helped in generalising their substantial will and hence spreading them across space and time. This failed cooperation between differing anti-globalist political strands – that is, between New Left, New Right and cosmopolitanism – stands in sharp contrast with the entanglement of pro-globalist ideas, pursuing the politics of bureaucratic – from a critical point of view, nihilist – cooperation and empty verbalism about the possible gains of globalisation. Nevertheless, *Table 5.1* tries to show

that there might be an in-between ideational sphere, one which is anti-globalist but not antagonistically against some traditional ideology at the same time; on the contrary, these in-between ideological strands tend to represent a kind of complementarity of traditional ideologies, like the attempt by ordoliberalism to do the same. Despite their silence, weak structurisation in the current political sphere and handicaps in general political discourse, such groups might be able to represent protest sentiment in a more consistent way in the long run than those ideational strands against globalisation *and* against some other ideologies' late-modern reminiscences.

Note

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Chapter 6

"Kill the Bill" protests in British politics

Małgorzata Kułakowska

Introduction

The Bill in question with the full name "Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill" (PCSC Bill), referred to as "the Bill" in this chapter, was introduced to Parliament on 9 March 2021 (Hirst et al., 2021). It has been acknowledged that the broad scope of a lengthy document (more than 300 pages) would lead to "significant changes across the criminal justice system" (Ibid.). The second reading took place in the House of Commons on 15 and 16 March; the Bill got moved through Committee Debate in May, Report Stage in June, and the third reading in July passed to the House of Lords. At the time of finishing this chapter, the Bill had not yet been accepted by the House of Lords[1] and, as of September 2021, was at Committee Stage (UK Parliament, 2021c).

The chapter aims to analyse the protests directly related to the Bill, identifying the contended clauses, significant sociopolitical contexts and meanings. The research questions are as follows: Who protested against the Bill? What were the principal values and concepts garnered to challenge the Bill? Which parts of the Bill were most challenged?

According to the government, the solutions and measures included in the Bill are related to the objective of protecting "citizens and communities" and ensuring "that they can get on with their daily lives peacefully and without unnecessary interference" (Home Office, 2021). The Bill aims to protect police and other emergency workers and to protect the public "by giving the police the tools . . . to tackle . . . disorder." It has also been emphasised that the Bill supports "the right to peaceful protest" while giving the police powers to "stop disruptive protests from disproportionately infringing on the rights and freedoms of others" (Ibid.).

Size and scale of the protests

The proposed legislation has been met with significant opposition, and the data collected by *The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* (ACLED, 2021) was used to assess the size and scale of the protests. The analysis included all the events recorded in their database from 9 March 2021 till 24 September 2021,

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located in the United Kingdom. There have been several events in March coinciding with the date of the publication of the Bill connected with the murder of Sarah Everard, and while the initial reason to publicly display anger and grief was not directly connected to the Bill in question, soon these two themes became closely connected (as explained later in the chapter). The first reference to the *Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill* is present in the protest in London on 14 March, where the reasons for the protest were the following:

> to call for an end to gender violence, oppose the treatment of those who attended a vigil for Sarah Everard the previous night and to protest the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which was introduced to parliament in the previous week and seeks to give police more power to restrict non-violent protests.
>
> (ACLED, 2021)

This event was classified as a peaceful protest with hundreds attending.

Out of 1,217 events recorded in this impressive database for the United Kingdom for 2021,[2] 132 referred to the Bill in question. The basic characteristics of these events are presented in Table 6.1.

Most protests took place in March, April and May when the Bill was debated in the House of Commons. Most protests were classified as peaceful; only four were labelled as riots. Even though some passages of the Bill have some impact on Scotland policing and even though there were similar events related to Everard's murder organised both in Scotland and in Northern Ireland, there was not a single event directly connected to the Bill outside England and Wales. In Wales, most of the events took place in the capital, Cardiff, but some were held in other locations. In England, the events were even more dispersed throughout the country. Unfortunately, the data on size is missing from some of the events;[3] for 38 records, the data suggests around 100 participants or fewer,[4] for 38, between a hundred and a thousand protesters,[5] and for a few, around a thousand or more than a thousand. Even though some protests turned into violence, fatalities did not occur.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of the Bill-related protests from 1 January till 24 September

Month of occurrence	*Type*	*Region*	*Size*
March (36)	Peaceful protest (118)	England (121)	Small [≤100] (38)
April (57)	Protest with intervention (10)	Wales (11)	Medium [100 < 1000] (38)
May (32)	Violent demonstration (4)		Large [≥thousand] (7)
June–September (7)			Lack of sufficient data (49)

No institutional actor was mentioned for almost half of the events recorded (51 out of 132). Fourteen mentioned police forces, but there has been a significant presence of certain opposition parties and groups, such as Labour Group, Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party, Green Party, and organisations, such as Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, Stand Up To Racism, some unions and ethnic group representations (including Travellers community).

Analytical patterns

To identify the significant meanings of the protest, notes included in the ACLED Database were analysed and coded. Out of 132 events related to the Bill, 122 contained some basic information about the legislation in question, arguably the reason for the protest. The dominant theme was that "[the Bill] will give **police** more **powers** to **restrict/shut down peaceful/non-violent protest.**"[6] There were also references to **participants of non-violent protests** suffering from **stricter penalties and restrictions.** The references to the impact on Travellers' communities were just a few. It seemed obvious that the protests connected to the Bill focused on the policing protests policy – some were organised directly outside the police stations, and in two instances, police officers were assaulted.

In this light, the case of Sarah Everard requires extra attention. What could be seen as only a time coincidence seems more meaningful. Sarah Everard was brutally murdered by a Metropolitan police officer in London on 3 March 2021, who used his status to falsely arrest her on the pretence of breaking COVID-related restrictions. With her reported missing, the search continued until her body and the killer were found the following week (Hughes, 2021; Strick, 2021). The case resonated strongly with the general public, prompting discussions on gender violence and policing standards. Vigils were organised the following nights, some banned by the police due to ongoing COVID restrictions. One particular vigil was to be organised on Saturday, 13 March, at Clapham Common in London, but it was officially banned and cancelled a day before that date. Thousands of people who came to honour Everard were met by police forces who tried to disperse the protesters (Peltier, 2021). Images of police officers detaining female protesters proved to be particularly upsetting and led to some prominent public responses, such as Boris Johnson's, Priti Patel's and Sadiq Khan's, all condemning police behaviour while handling such a sensitive issue (Patel, 2021; Khan, 2021; BBC News, 2021).

While the thorough analysis of Sarah Everard's case and its consequences goes far beyond this chapter's scope, some clear links are visible in the data on events. The Bill in question was introduced to Parliament on 9 March, but the Second Reading took place on 15 and 16 March, just after the Clapham Common Vigil. Nine events refer to the Bill and Sarah Everard; all the events took place in March, and the first-ever event mentioning the Bill (from 14 March) was directly linked with opposing the treatment of vigil participants (ACLED, 2021). Moreover, during the debate in the House of Commons during the Second Reading, this theme

was frequently referenced (Hansard, 2021a, 2021b). However, while the feelings and strong emotions evoked by the events related to Sarah Everard's case might have arguably been a spark igniting the protests against the Bill, it is also visible in the data that later protests hold still in March. Later in April and May, protests focused on the Bill and its implications on peaceful assemblies and marches without so much clear referencing to Ms Everard's case.

Contended parts of the Bill

Not all the passages of the Bill were met with equal criticism. The analysis of critical publications makes it clear that the most contended parts were connected to the right of the protest. The same contention was also visible when analysing the data on the events discussed earlier.

To reconstruct the critical narratives, several sources will be used. The first will be the briefing prepared by the think tank Liberty for the Report Stage in the House of Commons in July 2021 (Liberty, 2021). This organisation takes an apparent stance against the proposed Bill, stating that it "represents one of the most serious threats to human rights and civil liberties in recent history" (Liberty, 2021, p. 1) (sic!). In the briefing, the authors emphasise several parts of the Bill, namely clauses referring to the serious violence duty (7–22), public order (55–61), unauthorised encampments (62–64) and serious violence reduction orders (140–141). The authors of the document state that "each of these clauses must be removed from the Bill" (Ibid.).

In reference to the serious violence duty, the authors write that the "new statutory duty" placed on such institutions as healthcare or education providers to collaborate and disclose data constitutes "a police-led, enforcement-driven strategy" and, as a result, risks "hindering the provision of vital services" and undermining trust (Liberty, 2021, pp. 3–7).

Liberty (2021) describes public order clauses as "a radical restriction of protest rights" and "a concerted attack on the right to protest" (p. 7). Analysed clauses are, in fact, amendments to the existing act – the Public Order Act 1986, which regulates policing of public processions. In a much-debated amendment introduced by Clause 55, the police are allowed to restrict the procession based on a belief that the procession might generate a disruptive level of **noise**. According to the authors, such proposals "constitute a gross expansion of police powers" (Ibid., pp. 8–9). They argue that noise is an organic element of protests. There is also a significant risk of police forces going beyond their legal powers and unlawfully stopping protests to be successfully challenged in the courts afterwards. There are also concerns that the Bill provides too much discretion to the police creating an extra burden and tension. Furthermore, the Liberty finds it worrying that extra clarification of the Bill clauses is to be established through secondary legislation provided by the Secretary of State for the Home Department; the authors called it "a sweeping and dangerous power" (Ibid., p. 11) to be handed to the Executive. Clause 56 imposes the same condition related to noisiness to assemblies. Clause

57 makes breaching the conditions imposed by police powers an offence regardless of whether the offender knew about them or not. Authors suggest that "risks criminalising people who unwittingly breach conditions the police impose" (Ibid., p. 13). Furthermore, if conditions imposed refer to the number of participants or level of noise, how could a single participant establish whether they violated this condition or not? The Bill also increases the maximum sentences for breaching those conditions. Criticism was also levied on Clause 58, which amends a different Act, namely the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011). The amendment aims to expand the area around Westminster where some restrictions on protest activities already existed and, to expand the list of those prohibited activities, to include "obstructing the vehicular access" (Ibid., p. 14) to Parliament. While protest in the vicinity of Parliament is still allowed, Liberty expresses concerns about creating "a de facto buffer zone" (Ibid., p. 15). The similar clause (59) allowing the Secretary of State to designate alternative spaces as "controlled areas" (in case Parliament was to relocate) was also rejected – on a comparable basis, as "a disproportionate interference with the rights of freedom of expression and assembly" (Ibid., p. 16). Clause 60 relates to the offence of public nuisance – according to it, anyone causing serious harm or risk of serious harm might be sentenced to up to ten years in custody. Liberty draws attention to the fact that serious harm is to be interpreted in such a way that it also includes "serious distress, serious annoyance, [and] serious inconvenience" (Ibid., p. 16), and as a result, "the proposed statutory offence is incredibly broad and carries heavy risks for protest rights" (Ibid.). The last clause analysed in this section is Clause 61, imposing conditions on one-person protests, referring again to the disruptive noise trigger. Furthermore, the new clause proposes a criminal offence of encouraging some to organise such an individual protest, which might lead to fears related to simple conversations with protesters (Ibid., p. 18).

In reference to unauthorised encampments, Liberty points out that the measures included in the Bill attack the way of life of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These clauses (62–64) are amendments to another existing act – the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) (1994). Clause 62 creates a new offence – residing on land without consent, provided such an action is likely to cause "significant disruption, damage or distress" (Ibid., p. 19). Liberty emphasises the vagueness of the terms used. As this clause also institutes "new vehicle seizure powers" – for nomadic communities, this corresponds to seizing their homes and possessions. Liberty suggests such a proposal undermines Gypsies and Travellers' rights while the state "has a positive obligation to protect" (Ibid., p. 20) them. Instead of solving the issues which might lead to unauthorised encampments – such as shortage of site provision, the government is introducing measures which risk trapping "people in a cycle of eviction and criminalisation" (Ibid., p. 21). Furthermore, Liberty notes that vague terms used in the Bill can also mean that cyclists going camping might get criminalised. Clause 63 constitutes another amendment of the CJPOA – relating to trespassing, broadening the catalogue of directing triggers to include "disruption and distress" and increasing the exclusion

period to 12 months (time during which people directed away from the given land are not allowed to return to it). Liberty's stand is that existing powers provided by the CJPOA are robust, and there is no justification for extending them. Clause 64 further specifies the execution of Clause 63 and, as such, is rejected by the document's authors (Ibid., pp. 18–23).

The final two clauses (140 and 141) analysed by Liberty refer to the Serious Violence Reduction Order (SVRO) imposed on a person based on their previous conviction. It provides the police with the new power to stop and search an individual subject to an SVRO "whenever they are in a public place" without the need to "form reasonable suspicion" (Ibid., p. 23). Authors call this tool "oppressive by design," reducing the individual to their past behaviour and making them prone to intrusive monitoring. Liberty also draws attention to the existing racial disparities in terms of stop-and-search practices – with communities of colour searched at significantly higher rates. In the view of the authors of the analysis, the introduction of SVRO will "reflect, deepen and compound the discrimination marginalised communities face at every juncture of the criminal justice system" (Ibid., p. 25).

When comparing the analysis presented by Liberty organisation with the one prepared by the Good Law Project (2021), it is clear that some other organisations focused solely on the right to protest, that is, changes to the Public Order Act 1986 (clauses 55–61).[7] In particular, it was underlined that the Bill's provisions might threaten rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The critical analysis of these clauses was, in fact, pretty similar. For example, in the briefing for MPs prepared by the Good Law Project (2021), we read that "these clauses represent a significant assault on civil liberties and democratic rights, will have a chilling effect on our right to protest, and result in the disproportionate criminalisation of peaceful activity." When referring to a disruptive noise trigger, the authors of the briefing point out that these provisions breach the international human rights norms, as the rights to freedom of assembly should be protected "**even if** they cause a certain level of disruption" (Ibid.). Again, the wording of the Bill is rejected as so vague that it leaves space for "misuse and misinterpretation" (Ibid.). The authors of the Good Law Project briefing also point out the word "impact" – the provisions imposed by the police are to prevent "disorder, damage, disruption, impact or intimidation" (Ibid.). The authors see it as a sign of "the Government's ambition to meaningfully remove the right to protest" since the purpose of the protest is "to have impact" (Ibid.).

Finally, both the petition against the Bill launched by Samantha Hurst, which reached more than 250,000 signatures (Hurst, 2021),[8] and the Joint Statement published by the Extinction Rebellion on behalf of almost a hundred organisations and groups (Extinction Rebellion, 2021) focused their rejection of the Bill on the rights to peacefully assemble and protest. The petition referred to the rights "to peaceful assembly and protest" as "fundamental principles of any democracy" (Hurst, 2021). However, in their petition against the Bill, Amnesty International UK did mention not only the right to protest but also stop-and-search-related provisions and restrictions on "the right to roam" (Amnesty International UK, 2021b).

Why and how does it matter?

Several concepts will be used to analyse the meaning of the protests. The first one will be **trust**, defined by the belief or assumption that "other will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm . . ., and will look after our interests" (Newton, 2007, p. 343) or as "a bet on the future contingent actions of others" (Sztompka, 1998, p. 20). Certainly, we will be looking at the political or public trust, also called vertical, which might be defined as trust towards public/state institutions in the context of the asymmetry of power (Sztompka, 2007). Sztompka analyses factors conducive to trust and, among others, mentions restrictions levied on the state institutions' powers. This theme is consistent with his models of the culture of trust, where accountability of persons and institutions constitutes an important independent variable (Sztompka, 1999). He sees it via the lenses of two paradoxes – the first one refers to the fact that trust is being built on the mechanisms of distrust, what he calls "the institutionalisation of distrust in the architecture of democracy" (p. 140). One of the democratic principles that Sztompka directly links to the idea of institutionalising distrust is the idea of civic rights – according to him, citizens must have measures to express their demands to the state authorities.

The second concept is **legitimacy**. As shown by Heywood (2013), it can be analysed as a moral principle – looking for normative justification of obedience and empirical reality of obedience. In the context of policing, the concept is analysed by Bradford et al. (2021), who show how central it is to our understanding of policing. It is clear that in liberal democracies, "police . . . rely on the legitimacy" (p. 642) and cooperation of citizens. What is crucial in that respect is the assumption of "shared norms and values" with a great emphasis put on "just procedures" (p. 643). A set of normative expectations is connected to policing, including the boundaries of police actions and the wider concepts of "the nature of order in society" (p. 643).

It seems clear from the analysed materials that many social actors questioned the ideas behind the Bill. What is paradoxical is that protesters battled the limitations on peaceful protests, referring noticeably to the values of democracy. The protesters might then portray themselves as guardians of democracy, protecting it against the powers of the government. In this context, the role of the police has proven to be very challenging. The government-led legislation[9] has sparked protests not only outside conservative MPs offices but also in the vicinity of police stations. Certainly, dramatic events from March 2021 linked to the murder of Sarah Everard and policing in the shadow of the pandemic have seriously hindered building trustful relations between police powers and protesters.

Restrictions of the chapter and further research questions

There are several limits to the analysis presented in this chapter. The first one is chronological. The database of the events analysed was valid till 24 September, so it did not include the newest editions to protests, while, as the Bill was still being

debated in the House of Lords (UK Parliament, 2021c), the organisations such as Liberty or Amnesty International continued to battle it.[10] The second limitation is more connected to the character of the chapter situated within the scope of sociology of politics and not within the British law analysis: the Bill in question was not thoroughly examined,[11] nor were all the parliamentary speeches related to that. Rather, the approach taken in this chapter was to focus on the opposition to the Bill and the arguments raised against it. Finally, the development of the Kill the Bill movement cannot be seen as complete. Even though it is clear that the peak of interest took place in March 2021, it is not certain how the movement will develop in the foreseeable future. Further research could first follow the movement and the reception of the Bill, or – in broader terms – look at the trust between police authorities and citizens or analyse the issue of government powers to restrict protest as a fundamental dilemma of democratic states.

Notes

1 In the British system, the Bill becomes the Act of Parliament (law) once approved by both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent (UK Parliament, 2021a).
2 The period covered was from 1 January till 24 September.
3 For 44 events (out of 132 analysed) the information on size is "no report," but there are also a few not easy to interpret such as "large numbers," "large," "many" or "crowds." See (ACLED, 2021). When reaching out to ACLED for a comment on how to refer to their data properly, I have received the information that the size is not "a systematically coded variable" (due to lack of consistency in reporting), but instead the indication of how "sources report on size," and hence should be treated with caution in analysis (S. Jones, personal communication, 5 October 2022).
4 I have included here descriptions such as about 100, around 80 to 100, roughly 100, up to 100, but also "dozens," "at least 50" or "around 35." There was just one record of the event with the size classified as around 10. See (ACLED, 2021).
5 I have also included here descriptions such as "between 100 and 150," "between 100 to 200" or "around 150."
6 It is a non-direct quotation from the database as I am presenting recurring phrases as alternatives. See (ACLED, 2021). That category was absolutely dominant – present 102 times.
7 Even though the briefing authored by the Good Law Project mentions other concerning clauses and parts of the Bill, the organisation does not devote equal attention to their analysis. See Good Law Project (2021).
8 The government responded to the petition on 6 April, and Parliament debated the petition on 26 April (UK Parliament, 2021b; Hurst, 2021).
9 It has been noted that the Bill addressed certain concerns expressed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Cf. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2021).
10 For example, there has been the so-called Week of Action planned from 10 to 17 October 2021 and organised by several organisations, such as (among others) Amnesty UK, Liberty, Stonewall, Freedom from Torture, the British Institute for Human Rights, The End Violence Against Women Coalition, to protest against not only the PCSC Bill but also Nationality and Borders Bill and any plans to review the Human Rights Act (Amnesty International UK, 2021a).
11 The analysis of the Bill was hindered by the fact that the document contained many amendments to the previous acts, and as a consequence proper legal analysis would necessarily involve the analysis of all the legal references (UK Parliament, 2021c).

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Chapter 7

Women's social movement to end violence against women

The case of Chile

María Paula Malinowski Rubio

Introduction

Since the times of the French revolution,[1] when women started speaking with one voice, women's social movements have continued to be established; therefore, women's struggle (and the struggle of men who support them) for their rights and freedoms, first civic, then political, and now social rights, has been going on for almost 300 years. According to Ana de Miguel, "in the broad perspective, one can say that feminism always existed when women, either individually or collectively, complained about their unjust and hard fate in the patriarchate system and demanded a change to their situation, a better life" (de Miguel, 2011, p. 3). Nevertheless, it was collective feminism that achieved actual results for women. The history of collective feminism can be presented either through changes in its formulation over time, namely through changes to consecutive feminist discourses or through successes achieved by women. This chapter focuses on the latter. Although this has been continuing for a long time, the goals of the feminist struggle have not been achieved, either in all parts of the world or in all aspects thereof. Furthermore, while it can be said that in most countries of the world, women formally have the same rights as men, these legally guaranteed rights and equalities frequently exist on paper only. Although it is true that the treaties on civil and political rights, as well as all documents referring to human rights, contain a requirement to guarantee that men and women must be able to enjoy such rights equally (e.g., the United Nations, 1966, Article 3), in practice, there are still groups suffering exclusion, discrimination, exploitation and/or inequality, women being one of these groups. The forms of discrimination with respect to women, as pointed out by the UN, include violence against women as "gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men" (Human Rights Library, 2003). Therefore, to discuss the equality of men and women, it is critical to eradicate violence against women, the phenomenon that the song "A Rapist in Your Path" ("Un violador en tu camino") speaks about.

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Methodology

This chapter constitutes quality research of an exploratory nature as there are few studies on the performance "A Rapist in Your Path" created by the LASTESIS Collective,[2] which is a recent social phenomenon.

The data of interest for this chapter regarding the "A Rapist in Your Path" performance (meaning who performed it, where, in what language, for what purpose, how, etc.) derive from information found in the mass media and principally on the internet. The performance spread quickly owing to being shared on social media (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram etc.) by those whose attention it drew, as well as by reaching society in general through traditional mass media (press, TV, radio), the majority of which also operate on digital platforms. Therefore, the most effective method of collecting the data was to perform an internet search that allowed one to determine fundamental aspects of the performance and its development over time. An important source of information was also formed by the book published by The LASTESIS Collective in 2021.

Although the work related to data selection took time and effort, it is not entirely satisfying. In Spanish alone, a Google search for "LASTESIS a rapist in your path/un violador en tu camino" has yielded as many as approximately 71,600 results. The search for the entry "LASTESIS" by itself yields approximately 11,400,000 results. The search for "a rapist in your path" in English gives approximately 20 million results. Moreover, many of the sources are inaccurate, sometimes containing contradictory information, often do not provide the dates of the events discussed or are imprecise with respect to the time frame.

A detailed analysis of this phenomenon would require a macroanalysis of the data published on the internet, which, due to the factors above (particularly the large volume of the data), is impossible without appropriate tools for data search and analysis, which were unavailable to me while writing this chapter.

The events of 2019

Convinced that the voices of protests, claims and complaints are heard better if they are pronounced from the public space, four women forming The LASTESIS Collective decided to use art, including stage art, to popularise the feminist theory from the streets because, as they point out, the theory is omitted in formal education; their other goal being to abolish negative stereotypes regarding feminists (LASTESIS, 2021, pp. 105–107). Early in 2018, LASTESIS started working on a theatrical piece planned to have its premiere on October 24, 2019, an event which was rendered impossible because of the "social outbreak" in Chile[3] that had started a week earlier (Pais, 2019). The performance featuring the song "A Rapist in Your Path," also known as "The Rapist Is You," was written by LASTESIS while the choreography created for it was not planned as a form of protest but formed part of the aforementioned theatrical piece. It was presented for the first time on November 20, 2019, in the centre of Valparaíso,

in the midst of social protests in Chile (Avendaño Santana, 2022, p. 98), upon an invitation from "Fuego. Acciones en cemento"[4] (FAEC), an organisation established in the context of the Chilean social outbreak to conduct protests in the public space while using art (performance, actions, interventions etc.) as a weapon (Goethe-Institut Chile, 2022). In this context, LASTESIS were invited to perform an intervention in the streets of Valparaíso and, as they themselves write,

> [W]e openly appealed to women, as well as persons and dissident groups to participate in the performance of "A Rapist in Your Path" due to the high number of reports against the police related to political-sexual violence in the context of protests within the framework of the social outbreak deriving from the social revolt started in Chile on October 18.
>
> (LASTESIS, personal communication, 2022)

It was performed for the second time a few days later, on November 25, in Santiago de Chile (Europa FM, 2019). Amateur videos of performances in Chile and across the world gained popularity through social media (Pais, 2019). Since then, the performance has been repeated not only in other cities in Chile but also in other countries on all continents, "becoming [as many newspapers have put it] a true feminist anthem on a global scale" (Correa Camiroaga, 2019). On December 27, approximately 10,000 people gathered and performed the song in Santiago (Pais, 2019). Soon, subsequent performances were published on the internet showing new videos of the performance given in most diverse places, and with the spread of the performance in non-Hispanic countries, videos in many distinct languages started to appear.

What started as a performance addressed at violence against women, prepared by a small group of women, soon spread and was referred to as a social movement. The term "social movement" has been applied to explain various sorts of collective actions in diverse social and political contexts, one which has yielded many approaches focusing on different components of such actions.[5] Due to the fact that I do not intend to conduct a theoretical analysis of the social movement, I will limit myself to two definitions of the term. The first comes from the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* and is useful for its simplicity as it defines a social movement as "an organised effort by a significant number of people to change (or resist change in) some major aspect or aspects of society" (Scott and Marshall, 2015). The other is more complex, but thus more complete, containing three fundamental components of the phenomenon that I find interesting here, "as consisting in networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in a political and/or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity" (Diani, 1992, p. 3).

This case clearly meets all the requirements for being classified as a social movement. Although at the beginning "A Rapist in Your Path" was performed by few people, their number grew instantly to become a huge crowd organising itself

in cities all over the world to draw attention to the urgent need for eradicating violence against women and opposing the impunity that often accompanies such violence. The importance of this goal is confirmed by the efforts of individuals, as well as national, regional and international institutions. Undoubtedly, "A Rapist in Your Path" has been performed owing to the effort of a network of informal interactions that communicate and cooperate via social networks. This interaction involves individuals and groups and/or organisations, principally women and women's organisations, based on their female identity. The actions are driven by both cultural and political conflicts. We are speaking here about the cultural conflict between men and women, deriving from the acceptance and maintenance of patriarchal models of society, some of which accept and even sanction violence against women, whereas others tolerate it by putting in too little effort to punish the offenders. Political conflict occurs where the states or their institutions fail to protect or insufficiently protect its female citizens, do not penalise violence against women and girls, or do not penalise it strongly enough, often even protecting the perpetrators.

Social movements and other social measures, such as one-off demonstrations or protests addressing violence against women, are nothing new. Gender-based violence against women and girls is one of the urgent problems in Latin America, which keeps causing mass demonstrations in many cities in the region[6] (Centenera et al., 2019). The problem is so severe that it is often referred to as a "plague" (e.g., in Semana, 2017). However, protests are also observed in other places, organised worldwide, often in countries such as India (demonstrations against rape, see, e.g., El País, 2012) or France (demonstrations against femicide, cf. MUNDO, 2019). As pointed out in the report published by the United Nations in 2006, "The issue of violence against women came to prominence because of the grass-roots work of women's organisations and movements around the world" (Naciones Unidas, 2006, p. 7). Recently, there have been important voices of protest with respect to violence against women, such as #NiUnaMenos in Argentina in 2015 against femicide (Revilla Blanco, 2019, p. 48) or #MeToo in the United States in 2017 (Manzano Zambruno, 2019, p. 17) against sexual violence. What differentiates the social movement started in Chile by LASTESIS' performance is not the speed it spread around the world, as this had occurred previously in the case of the aforementioned #NiUnaMenos and #MeToo movements, among others. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that, firstly, the problem undertaken in LASTESIS' performance refers to violence against women regardless of its nature (#NiUnaMenos principally, although not exclusively, refers to femicide, whereas #MeToo – to sexual violence and, at least at the first phase, violence outside relationships); secondly, it speaks about the causes of violence against women; and thirdly, it focuses on who is responsible for the violence and how impunity protects the aggressors.

The performance "A Rapist in Your Path" relies on the investigation conducted by LASTESIS into sexual violence, homicide and rape in Chile (Pais, 2019), as well as on a solid theoretical background that reflects some of the ideas by Rita Segato and Virginie Despentes (LASTESIS, 2021, p. 110).

The song refers to the source of violence against women and the reasons for its continuation in the first two stanzas and the last two lines of the final stanza:

> Patriarchy is our judge
> That imprisons us at birth
> And our punishment
> Is the violence you DON'T see.
>
> Patriarchy is our judge
> That imprisons us at birth
> And our punishment
> Is the violence you CAN see.
> . . .
>
> This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
> This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
> (LASTESIS, 2021, pp. 102–103)

As one can see from the lines above, the blame for violence against women is attributed to patriarchal traces in culture.

Violence against women is expressed in three of the four lines forming the third stanza:

> . . . It's femicide.
> . . .
> It's our disappearances.
> It's rape!
> (LASTESIS, 2021,
> p. 102)

The second line of the third stanza directly refers to the impunity of the perpetrators of violence against women, ironically demanding it and not rejecting it:

> Impunity for my killer
> (Ibid.)

The fourth stanza comprises four repetitions of two lines that stress the fact that violence is not the fault of the victims or the circumstances in which they found themselves:

> And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
> And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
> And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
> And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
> (Ibid.)

Finally, the fifth stanza and the two last lines of the final stanza points to the persons to blame for the violence that include not just specific individuals but also representatives of the institutions that should protect the victims, which, however, permit the impunity of the attackers. Virginie Despentes stated that even men themselves are unaware "to what extent everything is carefully organised so as to guarantee they win without carrying too much risk when they attack a woman": (Despentes, 2007, p. 41).

> And the rapist WAS you
> And the rapist IS you
> It's the cops,
> It's the judges,
> It's the system,
> It's the President.
> . . .
> This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
> This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
> (LASTESIS, 2021, p. 103)

The performance includes a stanza from the "Chile Carabinieri Anthem" which did not form part of the original lyrics of the song and did not appear in the book published by LASTESIS in 2021. In the context of the song, this stanza is intended to be ironic, similar to the lines about impunity, as it brings out a meaning opposite to the literal meaning of the words:

> Sleep calmly, innocent girl
> Without worrying about the bandit,
> Over your dreams smiling and sweet,
> Watches your loving cop[7]
> (Himnos y Canciones de la
> Patria, 2017)

The reference to the cop does not calm girls down; to the contrary, it evokes fear. As the LASTESIS explain, these verses were included due to the need for adapting the lyrics to the circumstances taking place at the time of the performance (Pais, 2019), namely to the court trials of police officers being charged "due to excessive use of force against the demonstrators and passers-by, as well as severe abuse during the arrest," which had occurred during the riots at the time of the "Social Outbreak" (Montes, 2019).

The symbolism of the costumes and choreography is also significant. The performers have their eyes blindfolded with black bands, which refers to people wounded in the eyes by the weapons used for breaking up the demonstrations[8] (Ibid.),[9] while originally, they had veils on their necks or wrists (as a reference to

the decriminalisation of abortion) (Avendaño Santana, 2022). The choreography sometimes uses gestures to point to the accusatory tone of the song while squatting refers to the practice of forcing the detainees to squat naked (Montes, 2019).[10]

Everybody, including LASTESIS, were surprised by the success of the performance not only in Chile alone but also in many other countries. The performance gained popularity, with recordings spread via social media. LASTESIS received requests from other countries, among others Mexico and Columbia, for consent to deliver performances (Pais, 2019). As Paula Cometa Stage, a member of the collective said in one of the interviews, LASTESIS decided to make both the lyrics and the music written by themselves available for free "so that every territory can transform it" (Ibid.).

Clearly, the most outstanding effect of the performance of "A Rapist in Your Path" by LASTESIS was the fact that it was instantly used globally to draw attention to violence against women while also causing problems for the artists and evoking all sorts of reactions.

In May 2020, all four members of the LASTESIS collective were accused by the police of incitement to violence and threats against the police (Front Line Defenders, 2021). In June 2020, academics from Universidad de Valparaíso published their declaration of support for the LASTESIS Collective, inviting the entire Chilean academic community, as well as academics from other countries, to sign it (CIPER Académico, 2020).

The aforementioned writer and filmmaker Virginie Despentes pointed out that the "performance by LASTESIS is a war cry" (Gómez Bravo, 2019). In Turkey, a group of feminists was detained for singing "A Rapist in Your Path" (Suárez, 2019). In a University of Liverpool blog, LASTESIS was referred to as a Chilean collective that had globalised the feminist struggle (McDonald, 2020), with many other comments being published.

Reasons for the success of LASTESIS' choreography

Violence against women is a global phenomenon observed in all parts of the world, which affects or may affect any woman irrespective of their age, marital status, social position, occupation, economic standing, culture, skin colour, or any property or category considered. What unquestionably shows the scale of the problem and allows one to understand the vast range and effects of the performance of "A Rapist in Your Path" by LASTESIS, as well as the speed of its reception and acceptance by women from various parts of the world, is the constant presence of gender-based violence and continuous fight against that violence at a global level. Therefore, the presentation of gender-based violence worldwide and the history of efforts undertaken in all parts of the world to stop and eliminate such violence may help one to understand the phenomenon of the performance.

Gender-based violence

The United Nations defines violence against women as:

> [A]ny act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women and girls encompasses, but is not limited to, physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family or within the general community, and perpetrated or condoned by the State.
>
> (UN Women, n.d.)

The United Nations differentiates various types of violence: violence against women and girls in the private sphere, which may include economic, psychological, emotional, physical and sexual violence, femicide, honour killings, sexual violence, which includes sexual abuse, rape, corrective rape and cultural rape, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, child marriages and finally internet or digital violence (Ibid.).

Many organisations, both national and international (regional or global), continuously work on stopping and eliminating violence against women and girls. They operate in various ways, in diverse areas and with differing scopes. A major organisation in this respect is the United Nations, one that has undertaken measures to eliminate gender-based violence practically from its origin in 1945. Other organisations working on eliminating gender-based violence include, among others, the International Criminal Court established in Rome in 1998 (ICC, 2011), the Council of Europe established in 1949 (Council of Europe, n.d.a), La Organización de los Estados Americanos (Organisation of American States – OAS) established in 1948 (OEA, 2012), the Latin American Network of Strategic Litigation in Gender (La Red Latinoamericana de Litigio Estratégico en Género) which contributes to legal education and an intersectional approach, and cooperates on public policy and legislative reforms concerning issues related to gender equality and access to justice (Releg, 2021).

Alicia Barcéna, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC/CEPAL), points out that:

> Gender violence against women and girls occurs systematically and persists in our region. This is the shadow pandemic. It knows no borders, it affects two out of every three women and girls, and it happens in all spaces: in workspaces, in the context of political and community participation, on transportation, on the street, in educational centers, in cyberspace and, unfortunately, inside homes.
>
> (CEPAL, 2020)

According to the data from surveys conducted in six countries of the region, from 60% to 76% of women (about two-thirds) have experienced gender-based violence in various spheres of their lives, constituting a lethal threat often leading to femicide[11] (Ibid.), a phenomenon which is recorded at a high rate in the region. According to the official data provided by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean in possession of the aforementioned Commission, there were 4,640 cases of femicide recorded in 24 countries of the region in 2019 (Ibid.).

Violence against women is not, however, limited to Latin America, although this region is the second after Africa, where the problem predominates (García Cabezas, 2020). Thousands of women around the world die every year just for being women, regardless of whether the country is rich or poor, at war or at peace (SWI swissinfo.ch, 2019). In 2020, approximately 81,000 women and girls worldwide were murdered, of which around 47,000 (i.e., 58%) died at the hands of their partner or family member (ONU Mujeres, 2022).

According to the data provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2018, worldwide, over 736 million women above the age of 15 experienced physical and sexual violence within a relationship or outside it. Indeed, this number may reach even 852 million, which means that almost one out of every three women was a victim (WHO, 2021, p. XI), whereas sexual violence outside the relationship is higher in regions with high earnings (Ibid., p. VIII). Femicide more frequently occurs within a relationship. The latest data on the global rates originate from 2017, and in which one can observe that three out of five women killed died at the hands of their partners, former partners or family members, with the highest rate of femicide recorded in Africa, followed by Latin America (García Cabezas, 2020).

November 25, 2019, is a special date as it was when LASTESIS presented their performance for the second time, this time in Santiago de Chile. In 1999, the UN General Assembly designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which is why many organisations gather at public demonstrations, protests and other similar events on that day. The need to stop and eradicate violence against women and girls has led regional and international organisations to develop instruments appropriate for the purpose, a major part of which has been produced by the United Nations.

Declarations of tackling violence against women

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948, entirely and irrevocably acknowledged an inherent and inalienable right to equality, as well as to all fundamental rights and freedoms for all people without distinction of any kind, including their sex (United Nations, 1948, Article 2).

Soon afterwards, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1966 announced that "The States Parties

to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth" in this document are established (United Nations, 1966, Article 3).

Nevertheless, due to a persistent violation of human rights with respect to women, the UN General Assembly considered it essential to establish a new instrument to tackle the phenomenon. Therefore, in December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was enforced. Although CEDAW does not directly refer to violence against women, its Article 1 clearly explains that discrimination of women:

> shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.
>
> (United Nations, 1979, p. 2)

In 1993, moved by the brutal murder of the Mirabal sisters in the Dominican Republic in 1960 just for being women and activists, the UN General Assembly elaborated the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of December 20, 1993. It directly addressed violence against women, declaring that

> the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life
>
> (United Nations, 1993, p. 2)

The declaration now speaks directly about violence against women treating it as a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which includes all types of violence (Ibid.). It also points out that:

> [V]iolence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.
>
> (Ibid., p. 1)

In 1994, during the plenary session in Belém do Pará, Brazil, the General Assembly of Organisation of American States adopted the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, also

referred to as the Convention of Belém do Pará (Robles Osollo, 2013, p. 2). The Convention distinguishes between three spheres where such violence may occur, namely: in private life, in public life and "violence perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents regardless of where it occurs" (Ibid., p. 3).

In March 2013, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) adopted conclusions regarding "elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls," which was the first international agreement directly addressing femicide (CSW57, 2013, p. 5). The entire document points out that every act of violence against women, regardless of the nature of such act and the age of the victim, constitutes a violation of human rights and that there is no justification for the violation of such rights. Also, it was clearly stated that it is necessary to guarantee access to justice and end the impunity of the offenders (CSW57, 2013).

Another fundamental instrument to tackle violence against women is the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,[12] which established that "Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity," and that "Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity" among other things due to one's gender constitute crimes against humanity (ICC, 2011, Article 7). This is of utmost importance, as the Rome Statute, with amendments of 2002, for the first time perceives war crimes committed in all conflicts as incorporating a separate category of sexual crimes (Gurmendi, 2003, p. 404), including crimes against women listed in Article 7 "or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions" (ICC, 2011, Article 8). The rape of women and girls, particularly gang rape, being a constant element of armed conflicts, was not persecuted and penalised as war crimes until 2002. They were rather treated as prizes of war (Montoya, 2018), with the perpetrators mostly remaining unpunished (Gurmendi, 2003, p. 404; Torrecuadrada García-Lozano, 2018).

Significant importance must also be attributed to the Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence, drafted by the Council of Europe and enforced in 2014, which:

> is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence that is committed against women because they are women. It is the obligation of the state to address it fully in all its forms and to take measures to prevent violence against women, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators. Failure to do so would make it the responsibility of the state. The convention leaves no doubt: there can be no real equality between women and men if women experience gender-based violence on a large-scale and state agencies and institutions turn a blind eye.
>
> (Council of Europe, n.d.b)

Apart from the aforementioned instruments, many resolutions have been developed over the years condemning violence against women as a sign of depriving

them of their human rights. In 1985, the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi[13] introduced two particular obligations for countries: the care of women who were victims of violence and spreading awareness and social responsibility in this area. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing adopted the Platform for Action, where one of the 12 indicated areas for action refers to violence against women.

Important days for tackling violence against women

Apart from the instruments above for tackling violence, special days were established to remind one about women's rights, the right to be and feel safe and the need for further struggle. These include:

- September 23 – International Day Against Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Women and Children was established by the World Conference of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons in coordination with the Women's Conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in January 1999 (CIPREVICA – Centro de Investigación para la Prevención de la Violencia en Centroamérica).
- February 6 – International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, day of raising awareness on the issue to extend and direct efforts against this practice (United Nations, 2020).
- March 8 – International Women's Day established by the United Nations and celebrated since 1975. The date reminds one of the demonstrations in the early 20th century, particularly in Europe, by women demanding voting rights, better working conditions and gender equality (United Nations, n.d.b).
- November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. As already mentioned, it was established by the United Nations to commemorate the brutal murder of the Mirabal Sisters in the Dominican Republic, as they died just for being women and activists (United Nations, n.d.a).

The scope of "a rapist in your path"

The need for continuous development of new instruments to tackle violence against women, establishing days to remind one that this violence still exists and our need to tackle it to eliminate it, clearly indicates that violence against women, purely because they are women, still prevails in all societies of the world. Therefore, we are dealing with a universal phenomenon that "appears in all countries of the world, even those marked with consolidated practice of protection and promotion of fundamental rights" (Villavicencio Miranda and Zúñiga Fajuri, 2015). It would not be an error to state that it was for this reason that LASTESIS' performance and other social movements or campaigns have spread beyond their place of origin. This is also confirmed by the authors of the performance, who write that "mass appropriate of the intervention . . . shows us that this is a universal problem

and that sexual violence, just as any violence characteristic of the patriarchate . . . is global" (LASTESIS, 2021, pp. 108–109), as reflected by the data gathered by various institutions. The fact that the frequency of occurrence is not the same everywhere and that it is lower in some states does not mean that the problem is less severe in those countries.

Furthermore, as evidenced earlier, the performance refers to the fact that violence against women is also of a structural and cultural nature. Johan Galtung differentiated among three types of violence: direct, structural and cultural (1990). Direct violence refers to behaviours oriented at a threat to life itself and/or to restricting a person's capacity to meet one's basic needs (Galtung, 1990, p. 292), behaviours that, in this case, cover all forms of violence against women listed by the United Nations (cf. United Nations, 1993, Article 1, Article 2, Article 3). Structural violence "refers to situations of impairment in meeting fundamental human needs (survival, wellbeing, identity or freedom) as a result of social stratification processes, namely without the need for using any forms of direct violence," as well as to

> a conflict between two or more groups in a society (usually defined in the categories of gender, ethnic group, class, nationality, age, or other) where the distribution, access to, and opportunity of using the goods are systematically established for the benefit of one party and with detriment to the others as a result of social stratification mechanisms.
>
> (Tortosa Blasco and La Parra Casado, 2003, p. 57)

Cultural violence, in turn, refers to "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). Galtung moreover points out that all three forms of violence are interlinked and strengthen one another, whereby "with the violent structure institutionalised and the violent culture internalised, direct violence also tends to become institutionalised, repetitive, ritualistic, like a *vendetta*" (Ibid., p. 302).

The exact chronology of the path for the "A Rapist in Your Path" performance spreading in other countries is particularly difficult to determine due to the fact that the process was rapid and, in many cases, simultaneous in various locations. The information available on the internet, however, allows one to state that the performance covered a vast part of the world between November 25, 2019, when it started gaining popularity, and February 24, 2020.[14] Regular mentions of it can be found until February 2021, although they seem to be increasingly less frequent starting from February 2020. According to the information found on the web, the following can be listed:

- On November 25, 2019, *El País* informed its readers that the performance had taken place in over 50 locations in Chile (Centenera et al., 2019).

- On December 6, 2019, BBC News World provided information that "The Rapist Is You," as the powerful feminist anthem was called, had circulated the world (Pais, 2019).
- On December 8, *El País* informed its readers that thousands of female citizens worldwide had repeated the performance on those days: "From Chile through Lebanon. From Mexico through Spain. From the United States through Turkey. From Brazil through India" (Montes, 2019).
- Also, on December 8, news appeared that, on December 7, dozens of Indian women had performed "The Rapist is You" in the centre of New Delhi (El Periódico, 2019).
- On December 11, 2019, *The Chicago Tribune* reported that the performance had been performed "in many places worldwide," including Paris, Barcelona, Bogota and Mexico City (Sánchez, 2019).
- On December 13, The Feminist Assembly of Valencia (La Assamblea Feminista de València) performed a "replica intervention" of the performance in Valencia (Ribas, 2019).
- On December 15, 2019, *Deutsche Welle* published the news that Turkish MPs had performed a feminist protest during the General Assembly in Turkey by singing "The Rapist Is You" to draw attention to the femicide crisis in that country (Deutsche Welle, 2019).
- On January 24, 2020, Cuban news blog *Rialta* reported that the song by LASTESIS had circulated worldwide

  (Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Salvador, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, United States, Ireland, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, almost an infinite number of cities in Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Japan, India, Lebanon, Kenya, Turkey, Tunisia)

  (Medina Ríos, 2020)

- On January 16, 2021, information appeared that feminists from Minsk had joined the "international movement" titled "A Rapist in Your Path" by performing a flash mob (Svaboda, 2021).
- On February 13, 2021, *Wyborcza.pl* informed its readers about a demonstration organised by the Women's Strike in front of the seat of Ordo Iuris in Warsaw within the framework of protests against the reform of Poland's antiabortion laws, which included the performance of the Polish version of "The Rapist Is You" (Wyborcza.pl, 2021).

In September 2020, *Clarín de Chile* newspaper reported that "the lyrics of the song were adapted and translated into various languages, including Mapuche, Portuguese, Greek, Basque, Catalonian, Galician, Asturian, German, Hindi, French, English, Turkish, Arab and Quechua from the Cuzco region. The performance has even been adapted into sign language" (El Clarín De Chile, 2020).

In some languages, the translation was faithful to the original while others required modification for stylistic or cultural reasons. Therefore:

- in the version sung in Spain, the Chilean colloquial word denoting cops ("los pacos") was turned into regular "policías" ("policemen") (Ribas, 2019).
- in the Hindi version, a line was added to the original lyrics: "on behalf of the caste" (La Vanguardia, 2019), which refers to an important aspect of local culture that affects the treatment of women in India (Torres, 2022).
- in the Polish version, the lyrics go: "A to nigdy nie jest moja wina, nieważne, co piłam, nieważne, co nosiłam" [and it is never my fault, it doesn't matter what I drank, what I wore] (Wyborcza.pl, 2021). The mention of drinking is related to the fact that being under the influence of alcohol is still a way to justify the rapist and blaming the victim (Grabowska, 2017).

Another important element to be considered involves the different reasons for performing the song because, in various places, it addressed the problem or a certain aspect of violence against women that was particularly visible at a given moment. For example:

- rape in India (Reuters Staff, 2019)
- stricter anti-abortion laws in Poland (Nowosielska et al., 2020, Banaś in this volume)
- femicide in France (Le Monde, 2021)

The core of the problem in all cases, however, is the same, namely gender-based violence against women, protests against it and the urgent need to tackle it.

Conclusion

Despite developing all sorts of instruments for tackling violence against women and girls, despite establishing dates to commemorate, remind ourselves and activate the struggle, despite many years of work and effort, as well as achievements in the field, violence against women and girls persists and constitutes a global plague. This explains and justifies the great success of social movements such as "A Rapist in Your Path" worldwide. In its performance, LASTESIS speak about behaviours that are difficult to eradicate. As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, these goals have not truly been achieved, despite women's struggle for equal rights with men having lasted so long. Thus, rights and equalities written in the legislation of various states exist on paper only and, worst of all, without either men or women being aware of this. Although the social movement discussed here will not manage to achieve major changes by itself, as with any protest or action in defence of human rights, it can clearly contribute to achieving the intended objectives.

A systematic and exhaustive analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) of the available data on the social movement titled "A Rapist in Your Path" should now

be conducted to define its scope more precisely. Also, it should indicate factors contributing to its attractiveness in various locations and its impact on diverse societies, using tools to collect, select and analyse the macro-data, such as *data mining* or *data science*, without which the obtained results will always remain limited in scope.

Notes

1 Some authors date the beginnings of the history of collective feminism back to the Enlightenment, during the French revolution (cf., e.g., de Miguel, 2011, p. 8) while others – to the late 19th century and the Suffragette movement (cf., e.g., Rampton, 2008).
2 LASTESIS is an interdisciplinary collective comprising four women from Valparaiso, Chile, who fight against violence with art. Women forming part of the collective include Daffne Valdés Vargas, Paula Cometa Stange, Lea Cáceres Díaz and Sibila Sotomayor Van Rysseghem. All four have university education, some of them are university lecturers (LASTESIS, 2021, p. 110), as well as artists (LASTESIS, 2021, p. 106).
3 The "Social Outbreak" (estallido social) in Chile, triggered by the raise of underground ticket prices, resulted in mass social protests (Paúl, 2019).
4 In translation: Fire. Actions in cement.
5 Cf., for example, Diani 2015.
6 Protests and social unrest recurring in the Latin America in 2019 were discontinued with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic to return later in many countries of the region (Murillo, 2021). As Castro Riaño points out, although the context and circumstances of the protests in various locations differ, their causes and their course are very similar (2020, p. 159).
7 Translation into English after Serafini 2020.
8 The plastic bullets used by the police in Chile is less lethal but has caused "higher than usual numbers of eye wounds during mass demonstrations in Chile since October 2019" (Reynhout, 2020).
9 Many such incidents have been recorded by Human Rights Watch (2019).
10 This and other forms of sexual abuse by security forces have also been listed in the reports (Human Rights Watch, 2019).
11 According to WHO,

> Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls . . . Femicide is usually perpetrated by men, but sometimes female family members may be involved. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner.(WHO, 2012, p. 1)

12 On July 17, 1998, in Rome, over 100 countries (currently, there are 123 signatories) decided to establish a permanent International Criminal Court to persecute persons responsible for major crimes that move the entire world, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity (ICC, 2011, Article 1).
13 The United Nations has organised four World Conferences on Women which took place in the Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995).
14 At the map developed by Geochicas OSM, which gathers all the points where the performance has been held, one can see how far it reached before December 21, 2019 (Giménez Lorenzo, 2019).

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Chapter 8

Women's "Black Protest" in Poland

Symbolism and performance as *(un)effective* negotiation in political discourse

Monika Banaś

Introduction

"Black protest" in Poland, which is the subject of this chapter, is a part of a phenomenon of social rebellion that has been growing in the first decades of the 21st century, in terms of both its scale and scope and the number of protest campaigns occurring (Suliman, 2014, p. 109; Gregoratti, 2014; Harcourt, 2014). Studies conducted between 2006 and 2020 indicate the intensification of civil disobedience in various forms (Ortiz et al., 2022, pp. 13–15). This has taken mainly the form of peaceful demonstrations, although examples of public protest engaging in physical violence have also been recorded, as shown in the regions of North Africa, the Middle East or Asia (Ibid., pp. 114–115; Thailand Coup, 2014). Of the 2,809 protests that occurred in the preceding 15 years, the majority were due to public disillusionment with democracy and its actual application (1,503 cases worldwide), corruption, degeneration of the political class, dysfunction of the judicial system, loss of credibility of governments as independent bodies and perceived domination of international forces able to orchestrate domestic and international political order.

Slightly fewer were public protest of an economic order, concerning economic inequality and plans to reduce social welfare (1,484 cases). Social discontent stemmed from the increasingly weak social protection of workers on short-term contracts, including the so-called junk contracts, deteriorating living standards as a result of increasing food, energy and fuel prices. Changes to pension schemes, housing and tax policies and the weakening position of the middle class and the underprivileged or vulnerable groups were also among the triggers for some demonstrations. Issues concerning civil rights, including racial, ethnic, religious minorities, LGBTQ+ minorities and women's and girls' rights stood out in 1,360 cases, making this category the third largest.

The least numerous, however, comprised speeches criticising the so-called global order (and global justice). Protesters criticised the activities of entities such as the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union and the European Central Bank. In this category of protests, the issues of the US and Chinese foreign policies were

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perceived as imperialistic while the actions of the G20 countries were also raised. In 897 cases, public criticism was directed at insufficient protection of the environment and human-induced climate change (Ibid., 2022, p. 113).

Current research has provided additional insight into the specifics of contemporary protests. While between 2010 and 2014, protests were directed mainly against the budget cuts policies as governments' responses to global banking and financial problems, from 2016 onwards, the number of protest actions against ignoring the principles of democracy and weakening of its foundations has been visibly increasing.

Moreover, when compared to the protests of the 1960s and 1970s, a change in the profile of demonstrators of the 2000s was evident. Individuals, hitherto with little or no political activity, engaged in contesting the actions of authorities at local, regional, national and international levels. An apparent change in attitudes was visible, resulting from certain changes in the sphere of social awareness. Protesters who a short time earlier had been passive citizens now decided to take action by participating in demonstrations, picketing, rallying or occupying political institutions and disclosing restricted information inconvenient for the authorities or powerful private actors (e.g., multinational corporations). In the latter case, the internet has become an effective communication channel utilised by the so-called whistle-blowers and activists (Ibid., pp. 113–114).

This transformation has been observed not only in societies with a long democratic tradition but also in non-democratic societies (e.g., Belarus and anti-Lukashenko protests after the 2020 presidential election) and societies with various extents of colonial history (e.g., Brazil and the Mato Grosso do Sul anti-colonial events in 2013 or India and the agrarian protests in 2020). Social discontent, having different causes, is not just a matter of one region or country. The internet and social media, alongside traditional media, have become an often-used platform to communicate protests and to concentrate and consolidate public protest potential.

The specificity of contemporary social rebellion results from multiple factors, including the topic, the scope, the profile of the participants and the forms of protest involved. The studies identified 250 forms of non-violent protest, the most frequent being marches, demonstrations, protest assemblies, blockades, occupations and strikes. The increasing number of protests results from various disputes between citizens and the authorities. In the first decades of the 21st century, not only governments or regional and local authorities but also international actors implemented policies that seemed harmful to the interests of other states, societies, communities or minority groups (see, e.g., Sami vs. the Kingdom of Sweden, Banaś, 2019). The expanding range of actors against whom public protest has occurred indicates increased social activism generated by growing public awareness of multiple challenges and threats that transcend local, regional or even national frameworks. A prominent example of this is the "black protest" that took place in Poland between 2016 and 2020.

Black Protest – origin and development

In 2015, those holding power in Poland changed, when the hitherto ruling Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*), representing the liberal wing, lost the support of the popular majority to the United Right (*Zjednoczona Prawica*) in which the centre-right party, Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, or PiS), played a dominant role. The right-wing coalition represented conservative and nationalist values and prioritised strengthening the state's position as an independent actor free from foreign influence or domination of other states and international institutions. Without denying the legitimacy of membership in the European Union, PiS and its coalition partners emphasised the importance of rebuilding Poland's national heritage destroyed by the trauma of the Second World War and the political, social and, above all, economic subordination to the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991.

Representing conservative values, the United Right, led by PiS, placed particular emphasis on social and educational issues. Among these, the family now became the most important subject of legal and political regulations. The party's ambition was to create a legal, institutional and financial space that would best safeguard the interests of the family as traditionally understood. This perspective also included issues of procreation and childcare policy. Finding significant public support for the political programme of the United Right, NGOs supporting PiS proposed an initiative to modify the abortion law by narrowing its application. In March 2016, the "Stop Abortion" Legislative Initiative Committee applied to the Speaker of the Polish parliament's lower house, the Sejm, for its registration to open the legislative path to change the law. This application prompted a reaction from liberal circles perceiving a real threat of tightening the law given the ideological profile of those in power. Thus, a month later, a motion was submitted to the Speaker of the Sejm to register a "Save Women" Legislative Initiative Committee, which at the same time submitted a bill on "Women's Rights and Conscious Parenthood." In the summer of 2016, the "Stop Abortion" Committee gathered 400,000 signatures for their proposal while the "Save Women" Committee received half as many (Korolczuk et al., 2019, p. 7).

In September of that year, a social movement named "#black protest" was formed on the initiative of the left-wing Together party (*Razem*). Announced on social media, it gained many followers with the ever-growing support of the so-called ordinary citizens who did not share the government's ideological line. At the end of September 2016, as a result of growing social tension, a Facebook profile of the All-Poland Women's Strike (*Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet*, OSK) was created, which took over the coordination of campaigns against the right-wing government. The following months brought an escalation of the protest in the form of street demonstrations and anti-governmental slogans published on billboards and proliferated in liberal media outlets. On 3 October 2016, simultaneous protests took place in 150 Polish cities. The campaigning tactics of absenteeism

from work and the abandonment of domestic duties resembled the Icelandic protest of 1975 when the Icelandic women, by refraining from work, provided living proof of their significant contribution to the national economy. The protest resulted in a dramatically positive change for Icelandic women in many aspects, including political representation.

In the Polish case, the protesters, by not coming to work but taking to the streets instead, would relate this to past events, hoping for the effectiveness of these actions. The protesters' determination was reflected in anti-government speeches, freedom slogans and black outfits. They emphasised one's dedication to the defence of human rights, freedom of choice, freedom of speech, as well as contesting the conservative pro-family policies, which would force women to submit to a law restricting abortion availability, including cases of severe and irreversible foetal disability.

The proposed amendment to the law triggered waves of protests, which escalated into verbal violence, shouting, the use of vulgar language, along with the use of symbols referring to danger, oppression and even torture. Equally forceful campaigns were undertaken on the internet.

Although as a result, the Sejm rejected the "Stop Abortion" project by a majority vote, the resulting social tension did not abate. The then-acting prime minister, Beata Szydło, announced the development of a "Pro-Life" (*Za życiem*) programme supporting pro-natalist policies and increased social care for women with the so-called difficult pregnancies (Premier Beata Szydło, 2016).

Well-established Polish artists, actresses, singers, writers, etc. contributed to the rapid and effective accumulation of feminist anti-government potential. The use of an artistic medium, effectively reaching the emotional sphere of the audience, reinforced the social message making it not only a voice of the opposition but also a strong political voice supported by the left-liberal coalition. Strong criticism was also directed towards the Roman Catholic Church, seen by the protesters as the main initiator of the idea of modifying the abortion law. As a religious entity – according to the liberals – the Church should neither interfere in the affairs of the secular state, nor should it exert pressure on right-wing-oriented politicians, which it did, according to the protesters (Domagała, 2016; Szostkiewicz, 2016).

As a result of the negotiations on the so-called abortion compromise between the government and the opposition, the OSK intensified its activities, expanding its demands and, in the linguistic sphere, increasing the emotional charge expressed in the slogans: "no violence against women," "no to Church interference in politics" and "no to politics in education." These slogans resonated very clearly during a march to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2017. Organised in the spirit of transnational women's unity, the march emphasised the idea of solidarity, freedom and universal human rights. "Solidarity is our weapon" expressed the bonding idea of the community, alluding to the idea of the Polish anti-communist labour movement "Solidarność" (Solidarity) from the 1980s.

An opportunity to demonstrate opposition to the right-wing government was given by a visit of US President Donald Trump in July 2017. Marches and pickets

inspired by the Together party took place in front of the American embassy. Some participants wore outfits imitating dress codes from a TV series based on the dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1985). The outfits' colours, white caps and red gowns brought about an instant association with the Polish national colours, the colours of the Polish flag. The story depicted in the novel and the film, showing an oppressive system enslaving women, provided a frame of reference for the feminist demands made during the "black marches." Soon, however, demands escalated in the discursive layer into vulgarity as the situation unfolded.

January 2018 witnessed the next stage of the conflict. The OSK organised a series of mobilisation pickets under the slogan "Déjà Vu!" The action resulted from the intensification of appeals by the Catholic Church to the Polish government to stop eugenic abortion and from weakening support of both the Together party and Civic Platform for Black Protest initiatives.

The striking women were left de facto without a strong political base, which contributed to diluting their potential as a rebel formation demanding liberalisation of the law. Thus, in March 2018, a protest action called "Black Friday" was organised and carried out in the country's capital. The slogan resembled a revolutionary motto whose meaning could be translated into "Let's storm Nowogrodzka Street!" (PiS headquarters). According to governmental sources, the demonstration was attended by 50,000 people whilst the opposition indicated a much higher number of 90,000. In parallel, on the same day but mainly in the virtual arena, a "White Friday" protest was organised, bringing together supporters of more stringent abortion law, dressed in white to symbolise pro-life attitude ("Biały piątek", 2018).

One of the last significant acts of the protest took the form of a series of demonstrations organised in big cities, at the end of October and in November 2020. Triggered by a ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal (in Polish, *Trybunał Konstytucyjny*) on the unconstitutionality of a provision allowing abortion in the case of a substantial likelihood of severe and irreversible foetal disability (Constitutional Tribunal, 2020), this gave an additional boost for social public protest. However, it did not have the same impetus as in the initial phase of the 2016 protests. The waning of civic participation could be explained in several ways. Public attention was focused more on the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. The political priorities of the left-liberal coalition had also changed, causing them to lose interest in actively supporting the movement. More importantly, the protesters' symbols, slogans and language have challenged norms and values attached to Polish history, identity and collective memory of the struggle for the country's independence.

Symbol and symbolic interaction

In the multiplicity of individual and collective actions, some reach for symbols and special signs as means of expression. A symbol, in its concretised form, has

developed over centuries and communicates content indirectly relating to complex cultural codes.

The complex and ambiguous nature of the symbol has been, and still is, fluid, labile, in a continuous process of being made, based on shared experiences of communities sharing common traits stemming from ethnic, racial, religious or national background, among other things. The dynamics of this process is related to the timeless, universal character of the symbol, which outflows any categorisation. According to Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade, the most powerful symbols are made by archetypes – unique signs understandable to all people across time, place and cultures (Jung, 1959; Eliade, 1999).

The timelessness and, at the same time, the universality of archetypes translate into the particular disposition of the symbol as such. It is the suspension and connection between the temporal, here present, experienced at a given moment, the distant past and the future. The symbol thus serves as a bonding link between past, current and future generations.

A kind of generational bond, mediated by and made possible by the symbol, seems to be a permanent bond but under certain conditions. One of them is the immutability of the symbol's meaning, especially in its national or religious versions.

However, the meaning of a symbol does not stem solely from the symbol itself, even though it is, in its archetypal variant, absolutely permanent. The meaning of a symbol is derived from its content, form and the context in which it manifests itself. Context, in turn, implies third parties, individuals or communities. They are the ones who ultimately determine the meaning of the symbol and its interpretation. They are, therefore, or, in other words, become part of the symbol, modifying its meaning in the given "here and now." An individual or a community, through its subjectivity, integrity, identity and intentionality of action, gives the symbol a mark of causality. The power of a symbol's impact is thus a result of the symbol itself, the spatial-temporal context, and the cognitive and cultural dispositions of the individual/community using the symbol.

Examples of the instrumental use of a symbol, such as the ancient Hindu swastika, the Algiz rune, the Venus of Willendorf or the Muladhara chakra, point to a certain disposition of this particular sign (symbol). It is the liminality through which the meaning of a symbol can be modified, or, in other words, "borrowed," leading towards a new sense, hitherto distant or even absent in the individual or collective mind.

While in archetypes the meaning is permanent, that of a symbol can be modified. According to Fromm (1994), it results directly from an individual's personal experience (*incidental* form) or from a convention adopted by a group (*conventional* form). Both occur in parallel to the *universal* form. Only through the symbol's universal form one can understand himself/herself reaching the deepest layers of humanity (p. 38).

The code of human existence, encrypted in the symbol (Jaspers, 1999), becomes accessible through contact with culture, which is a product and, simultaneously, a tool in organising the world. As with any tool, culture too requires advanced

competencies refined through social practice and interaction, allowing an individual or a community to make their ideas, intentions, plans etc. real. This is possible due to the symbol's unifying power to attract human actors and capture realistic and idealistic visions.

Eliade (1999) argues that a symbol conveys a truth unattainable for humans through direct cognition but requires activating symbolic thinking instead (pp. 15–19, 202–208). The process is initiated and sustained by, among other things, pictures, sounds, colours, shapes, smells, imaginations and emotions. This particular property of symbolic thinking gives it primacy over other products of collective conventions, such as language or norms.

The archaic nature of the symbol, according to Juri Lotman, stems from the fact that the symbol is a reservoir of preliterate communal memory. Before the advent of writing, signs, and later their sublime forms, mnemonic texts were organised independently or as parts of larger complex narratives. The archaic nature of the symbol makes it possible to retain and store in memory even the most temporally distant texts relevant to a community (Lotman, 1988, p. 151). Despite its archaic trait, the symbol does not belong to a specific historical time; indeed, as Żyłko (2009) writes, "is not the property of a single epoch" (p. 226).

Another feature of the symbol is its flexibility consisting in its integration into the present context. The two faces of the symbol, timelessness and timeliness, correlate with its dual nature, linking individual and collective memories. This dual nature has the additional mark of being difficult to grasp and flickering, which makes the study of the symbol the subject of a variety of research fields, including psychoanalysis, literary studies, history of religion, cultural anthropology, art history or theology (Ricoeur, 1967, 2004). The diversity of disciplines involved in enquiring into the essence of the symbol and its dynamic content testifies to the rich potential of the phenomenon, which "gives rise to thought" (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 247–256). The symbol prompts humans to search for meaning, which we cannot find by relying only on our (limited) senses.

The symbol evokes an association of substitution, not as an ersatz phenomenon but as the presence of something absent. By substituting, the symbol presents itself. It does so by referring to the original function of the *symbolon* connecting two parts of something that once constituted unity (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 63–67). The meaning of the symbol, therefore, goes beyond the sign itself, beyond its temporal and physical framework. It becomes a kind of delicate network of meanings stretched between several dimensions (such as sociopolitical, cultural–religious, linguistic, individual and communal) and temporalities (past, present and future).

Constructed by these meanings, a network constitutes a kind of unique "topographical map," marking the direction of the human individual's journey in its individual and social manifestation. It is worth emphasising once again the unifying and identifying power of the *symbolon*, as *tessera hospitalis*. In ancient Greek and Roman traditions, this was usually a small object split in half and kept by friends as an element identifying the person. It could also be a word or a call to distinguish friend from foe.

The unifying power of symbol was stressed by George Herbert Mead (1934), initiating research on symbolic interactionism. The issues under investigation were human interactions arising from the meanings that individuals attribute to things and situations. Meanings arise from interactions and are subject to modifications resulting from ways of interpreting reality, which, in turn, has its origin in culture. Through culture, an individual acquires competencies in how to interpret, assign and construct meanings to observed and experienced phenomena. Hence, one of the basic analytical categories for social interactionism is "the mind" understood as a process (a process of thinking taking into account alternative possibilities of action in a given situation). Another category is "the self" as a manifestation of individual identity followed by "society" as a form of collective life, with internal structure, organisation and patterns of interaction. Complying with interaction patterns, individuals modify their behaviour, thereby influencing the meanings produced by other individuals. It is an ongoing process of interacting and undertaking social roles (Stryker, 1980). The effectiveness of this approach for explaining individual and collective behaviour has contributed to a growing interest of researchers in applying symbolic interactionism to contemporary social, cultural, religious and political phenomena (Kuhn, 1964; Blumer, 1969; Stryker, 1959; Taylor, 2000; Britt and Heise, 2000; Allen, 2014). Among the most popular questions analysed within symbolic interactionism are those related to family, identity, semiotics, postmodernism, narratives, feminism or social movements (Carter and Fuller, 2016, pp. 937–938).

The case of feminist protests discussed in this chapter falls into the concept proposed by Verta Taylor. This refers to a process of identity construction in which emotions and the type of negative experiences associated with stigmatisation, marginalisation or ostracism play a significant role (Taylor, 1996, 1999, 2000). Taylor focuses on social reactions towards the self-organisation and self-help processes of women who have experienced different types of social injustice, stemming from, among other things, traditionally conceived social roles and traditionally conceptualised gender. Taylor included in the study emotions as a motivating, unifying and identity-forming factor, with this allowing her to propose a relevant line for a better understanding of the processes of social mobilisation.

While analysing social movements, one of the relevant questions being asked relates to participating individuals' identity and how it changes under the influence of events and interactions with other participants (Jasper and Owen, 2014). Questions may also concern factors accelerating or slowing down identity transformation and how this process translates into community life. Symbolic interactionism, thus, finds application in studies where individual and collective engagement are researched when authorities, through their "rituals" (understood as a mode of power execution), try to limit the freedom of the collective and individual self (Shteynberg et al., 2022; Whitehouse and Lanman, 2014; Turner, 1974).

Some studies in this field focus on emotions as a motivating factor for sociopolitical activism. Objectively and subjectively perceived social injustices provide

a fertile ground for protests in which negative emotions such as anger, fear or shame initiate and sustain protest (Britt and Heise, 2000). Negative feelings, however, may, through collective actions, transform into positive emotional moods expressed as solidarity, compassion, cooperation, higher self-assessment and even pride (Ibid., pp. 260–265). This way, emotions may help to mobilise a group's social and political capital until then vulnerable and dominated by others (Lawler et al., 2014).

Symbols in action

The wave of protests, collectively referred to as the Black Protest, was a social upsurge prompted by strong negative emotions directed against the state authorities and the Roman Catholic Church as the proponent of changes in national pro-natalist policy. Resentment, grief and anger were reflected in the language, graphic art and symbols used by the protesters. The slogans read on banners, posters, placards as well as on social media escalated in brutality as the situation developed.

Slogans initiating the dispute referred to two bills submitted first by the conservative "Stop Abortion" initiative followed by the liberal "Save Women" campaign. The two catchphrases reflected a deep split in Polish society concerning not only legal issues but also world views. For conservative circles, issues such as nation, homeland, patriotism and protection of human life from conception to natural death were fundamental. For liberal communities, they were instead symptoms of growing fundamentalism among some politicians and activists. To warn public opinion about the possible radicalisation of the law, a so-called list of shame was distributed by the "Save Women" initiative with the names of parliament members supporting the "Stop Abortion" project. The intention was to put these individuals under public pressure, resulting in the withdrawal of their support for tightening of the abortion law.

Participants of the Black Protest used many slogans among which one was particularly frequent: "my body – my choice." The objective was to stress women's integrity as free and independent human being strongly opposing the biopolitical strategy employed by the government. The potential risk of annexing the privacy of citizens' decisions related to procreation contributed to a growing sense of losing individual control over one's private life. However, as Michael Foucault emphasised in *Society Must Be Defended* (1976/2003), the progressive absorption by the state of subsequent spheres of citizens' lives is something late modern societies have to face.

The growing tension resulting from the abortion dispute generated language showing the liberal side running out of patience and well-constructed arguments giving way to emotionally charged expressions with invectives as extreme examples. The escalation of the process started with the slogan "The joke is over! My body, my business" or "Enough is enough. Take your hands off our bodies."

"Women's hell" was another slogan that referred to a series of essays written by a prominent Polish writer, Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, in 1929. The author, a supporter of feminist movements and a dedicated advocate of equal rights for both sexes, warned against the enslaving nature of legislation experienced at that time, not only in Poland.

"The cursed women" and, in its radical version, "the cursed wombs" used in the Black Protest emphasised the status of women whose rights and will gradually got marginalised by the state authorities. The phrase alluded to "the cursed soldiers" – the term applied to the members of anti-Soviet and anti-communist underground movements active in 1944–1947. The reference to individuals persecuted by the communist regime was intentional and helped to draw a hyperbolic parallel between the two groups considered victimised.

The anti-church slogans also escalated over time. Some examples included: "Blood on the hands of the church," "The bishop is not a god," "Bishops, you've made women's hell!" or "Take care of the body of Christ." Although there were also other emotionally charged phrases, they are unsuitable for quoting here due to the vulgar nature of the language used.

The top slogan of the rich discursive repertoire was "This is war!" Visible at the demonstrations, it became permanently embedded in the urban space of big cities. It could be read on walls, pavements, advertising kiosks and other easily accessible well-exposed locations.

In the discursive layer, these slogans reflected the determination of the protesters. The progressive vulgarisation of the language was an offshoot of the brutalisation of language itself, experienced particularly in social media. The shifting boundaries between the tactful and the vulgar resulted in an increasing "demoralisation" of language, significantly limiting the space for dialogue. Invectives and abusive words directed at opponents limited the chances of a constructive solution. Although individuals adhering to vulgar language found, this was an effective way for attracting public attention, as it soon turned out, this produced no extra support.

The process of increasing brutalisation could also be noticed in the symbols used by the protesters. Alongside outfits black in colour, black accessories, black umbrellas and black make-up were used, resembling combat camouflage face paint. In the protestors' minds, the colour black was associated with their determination, persistence and mourning of a potential loss of freedom.

Black umbrellas played a double role. The first referred to the protest of the Polish feminists in 1918–1933, who used their umbrellas as a metaphorical weapon, when with umbrella handles, they tapped on the windows of the prominent politicians having the power to influence the law-making process. Using umbrellas in the Black Protest became a symbolic gesture uniting generations separated by a century. The second role of the black umbrellas was a very practical one. Monday, 3 October 2016, the date one of the biggest marches was held, turned out to be a rainy day. In addition – as an unintended side effect – open umbrellas created the illusion of a much larger crowd. As Monika Golonka-Czajkowska (2017) pointed

out, this annexation of the city space (and other places where the demonstrations took place) was part of a symbolic campaign that correlated with a ritual of public protest (Gluckman, 1963), a social drama (Turner, 1980), a modelling event (Handelman, 1998) and a performance of the collective body (Schechner, 2006).

A symbol that became a hallmark of the protests was a wire coat hanger referring to practices undertaken in the so-called illegal abortion underground, where pregnancy termination was carried out in appalling conditions. An object serving de facto a different purpose took on another role because of its secondary usage, one shocking in itself. For individuals uninterested in the idea of the protests, while the coat hanger symbol attracted attention, it did not explain much. The symbol remained "silent," for them irrelevant and, in this context, absurd and illogical, thus questioning the whole endeavour.

Alongside the "hermetic" symbol requiring extra knowledge to decode its meaning, there were also other marks more comprehensible to a broader audience. One of them was a lightning bolt in two colour versions, red or black. Due to its simplistic form, it became very popular, copied in large formats used at demonstrations or small ones such as emblems, imprints on clothing, decorative elements on bags, facial masks and house or car windows. This unsophisticated graphic form, easily multiplied, allowed a fast proliferation of the sign, associated with threat, danger and alertness. A lightning bolt sign is usually present on electric equipment, high-voltage facilities, at railway crossings or other similar spots where the greatest caution is needed helped quickly to transform the sign into a symbol and became a dominant element of the protests' aesthetic image. At the same time, the lightning bolt motif gave rise to controversy due to its alleged connection with pagan symbolism. This was suggested, among other things, in a statement made by the Deputy Speaker of the Sejm, Ryszard Terlecki, a PiS member who saw a strong resemblance between the sign used by the *Hitlerjugend* in Nazi-Germany and the "sig" rune associated with victory, strength, power, determination and dominion. Both references, the Nazi and the pagan, in the Polish historical context, a country occupied by Nazi Germany and a country with a strong-living Christian tradition, prompted scepticism and harsh criticism. Thus, to weaken the negative associations of the lightning bolt, the symbol was combined with the silhouette of young woman's head. The composition was made by a black profile with an incorporated red lightning bolt as a large hair clip, tastefully decorating the woman's hairstyle. The combination of the two signs reinforced the message of vulnerability (female) and power (lightning bolt) united to fight for women's rights. A simpler version of the symbol was limited just to the profile usually designed in black; however, lighter colours would appear, too. Using brighter tones gave the sign a milder expression without losing its meaning. It was designed for a public expecting a less emotional and more balanced discourse meeting the high standards one expects when communicating over a dispute.

Another sign that also produced controversies was a combination of two elements – one used in the Second World War and the other relating to the female

body. The first referred to the "Fighting Poland" symbol of the Polish Underground State and the Home Army during the Nazi-German occupation. It represented a combination of two letters, W and P, corresponding with the words Walcząca (Fighting) and Polska (Poland). In the 2016–2018 Black Protests, the symbol was transformed by inserting black dots in the rounded shapes of the W letter forming an anchor shape, which was now meant to resemble a woman's breasts.

The history of the fight against the Nazi occupation is firmly embedded in the Polish collective memory. It is a vivid and current story, still in living memory, recalled on every anniversary of events related to the Second World War and the fight for Poland's independence. The country's capital, Warsaw, razed to rubble, was the scene of particularly bloody fighting, leaving many civilians killed. The fact is commemorated by numerous plaques dedicated to the victims, observed in present-day Warsaw, where most of the Black Protests took place. The use of the "Fighting Poland" symbol and its distortion was therefore counterproductive, gaining no public acceptance except for circles with a weak emotional attachment to Poland's history of its fight for independence.

Conclusion

Analysis of the Black Protest development and its outcomes allows one to identify four causes of the protest's limited effectiveness. The first relates to making a travesty of independence symbolism, violating dominant norms and values associated with the fight for Poland's independence, during both the Second World War and the subsequent communist period imposed on the country by the Soviet Union. The second cause relates to the increasing vulgarisation of the language of protest, subsequently discouraging support for the protesters, even though the protest's original message was in line with the world view of the proponents. This aspect may, in turn, contribute to the third cause – the gradual erosion of support from neoliberal parties – which, in addition, saw no political capital to be gained in the movement any longer. Finally, the ongoing dispersal of the activities of the protest groups and, over time, the lack of consolidation of protest centres located in different regions of the country became the fourth cause of the Black Protest fading.

Attention should also be paid to the language of discourse used by both sides of the dispute. Language, as an effective persuasive tool (Austin, 1975), either attracted or discouraged the Polish public from being actively involved. The conservative side used phrases such as "conceived child," "termination of pregnancy," "killing of the unborn," "mother," "right to life," "human rights (to live)"; the neoliberal side, on the other hand, used terms such as "foetus," "termination of pregnancy," "pregnant woman," "right to free will," "right to decide on own body and life," "protecting human rights." Depending on the world view and one's set of values, the discourse appealed to different audiences. This exposed a dividing line and identification into "us" and "them," one of many lines that run through a society no longer as homogeneous it used to be at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Although the Black Protest, as a set of protest activities carried out by opponents of the group in power, showed great potential for effective pressure, this turned out to be limited in its extent. While the protest failed to push through the liberalisation of the abortion law, it did manage to partially maintain the status quo (abortion compromise) and, importantly, managed to demonstrate the power of this social movement, consolidating participants through solidarity (Ramme and Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2018) – a concept deeply rooted in Polish history and social practice (Kubik, 1994).

The limited success of the Black Protest, rooted in the facts mentioned earlier, was also due to the performative nature of the undertaken actions. The essence of performance lies in its subversiveness, anti-systemicity, transience, existence in the "here and now" and ephemerality while engaging memory, which is fragmentary, selective, flexible (in that it can be moderated) and therefore unstable (Auslander, 1992; Phelan, 1993; McKenzie, 2001).

Emotional memory becomes fuel for performance, as well as for sociopolitical aspects. The intensity of emotions, even the most extreme, weakens over time, just as the images stored in one's memory fade if not constantly recalled. Exaltation, agitation, anger, may turn into criticism and moderate forms of protest, thus losing the original impetus. However, the process is accelerated if accompanied by other phenomena undertaken in the public discourse (such as international security or economic crisis).

The calming of public sentiment generating the Black Protest resulted from conciliatory actions taken by the Polish authorities. However, this does not mean that this state of affairs will be long-lasting, as it can at any time enter again into the phase of constructive "destabilization," which is one of the ways of restoring symmetrical relations between power and society.

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Chapter 9

Turpism and anti-aestheticism of political struggle for Sami rights in Norway

Mariola Pawełko

Introduction

The ancestors of the modern Sami were the first to settle the Arctic lands of Fennoscandia (Mulk, 2000). Today, the land, closely related to the history of the indigenous community, is named Sápmi. The region includes the northern areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Kola Peninsula). The Sami people, despite being separated by the borders of several countries, openly declare ethnic and national unity. The declared concept of national unity, a community living beyond political borders, was confirmed by an official document adopted at the 18th Sami Assembly in Honninvåg, Norway, in 2004 (Honninvåg-deklarasjonen, 2004). The document states that the Sami people are one nation united by common culture, tradition and history (Honninvåg-deklarasjonen, 2004). The rights to self-determination of the indigenous community, land and freedom of decision-making in managing natural resources are strongly emphasised. These demands have been supported by the argumentation that the ancestors of today's Sami settled on the Arctic part of Fennoscandia around the 6th millennium BC, thus being the pioneers (Banaś, 2019, p. 303).

The period of free existence ended in modern times. Between the 17th and 18th centuries, Sami people were subject to forced Christianisation and forced to abandon their native tradition based on shamanism (Rydving, 1993; Pawełko, 2017). State authorities and missionaries of the Protestant Church unequivocally linked Sami culture with backwardness and sin, as it grew out of a deep belief in the power of nature, the world of guardian spirits and the efficacy of *noaidevuohta* shamanic rituals. The suppression of beliefs took the form of oppression, for example, by destroying drums, a ritual instrument, and forbidding the performance of *joik*, a Sami song or the use of the indigenous language (its dialects). These practices intensified, especially in the 19th century, under the influence of Lutheranism – Læstadianism – which considered elements of indigenous beliefs as a sign of sinful living.

Colonial violence took both a symbolic form (identification with the Sami culture entailed the risk of social stigmatisation, marginalisation and evoking a sense of shame) and a physical one when people suspected of practising indigenous culture, including the so-called witchcraft, were exposed to torture (Rydving, 1993,

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p. 32; Solbakk, 2007, p. 41). Repression was further compounded by legislation restricting Sami land ownership (Rydving, 1993, p. 54). There was also increasing interference with the traditional *siida* system, which involved the voluntary joining of several Sami families (not necessarily related to each other) to farm, hunt, fish and ranch more efficiently within a territory defined by natural terrain (Bårdsen et al., 2021, p. 82). The 20th century, especially until the 1940s, was associated with perpetuating racist attitudes underpinned by pseudo-scientific concepts of white race supremacy. These ideas also found fertile ground in Nordic societies (Spektorowski, 2004, p. 92). Such appropriation of these ideas resulted in the perpetuation of anti-Sami attitudes not only in the majority societies of Scandinavia but also among some Sami people, who saw their ancestral heritage as a factor inhibiting social and economic advancement (Eriksen, 2013, p. 53).

The change came in the 1970s, mainly in the Norwegian part of Sápmi. The indigenous community was mobilised by the plans of the Norwegian authorities, influenced by the industrial lobby. The aim was to resettle the indigenous people from the oil areas and partially industrialise the country's northern areas. The protest against the Norwegian authorities' plans and actions gained support from neighbouring Swedish and Finnish Sami. The growing dispute, covered by Scandinavian and world media, contributed to partial concessions from the Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish governments in the second half of the 1980s. However, some of the original objectives of the authorities materialised, such as the construction of a hydroelectric network in the Norwegian province of *Troms og Finnmark*. This construction created a kind of rebellious energy in the indigenous population, which became the starting point for a return to the ancestral culture that had been marginalised for many years and the reconstruction of a Sami identity based on the recognition of ethnic values.

The efforts of the Sami community, integrated by the spirit of ethnonational unity, brought gradual concessions from the state authorities, exemplified by the establishment of three Sami parliaments (*Sámediggi*) in Norway (1989), Sweden (1993) and Finland (1996). These institutions have a representative-symbolic character, and their decision-making concerns mainly the spheres of culture and education. Issues relating to the land, the natural resources located in Sápmi, the urban-industrial transformation of the northern regions of Fennoscandia and reindeer husbandry are decided by the state parliaments of Sweden, Finland and Norway (Banaś, 2019). The Sápmi land, rich in natural resources such as gold, silver, copper and iron, is a resource that the states mentioned earlier do not want to give up, reserving the right of exclusive management. This arrangement is not accepted by the Sami, who fear environmental degradation due to the commercial and industrial activities of state and private entities holding concessions to operate in the region. Plans, especially by the Norwegian authorities, to continue developing industrial and transport infrastructure threaten Sami interests, especially those related to grazing and reindeer husbandry (Pawełko, 2020; Öhman, 2010).

The relations of the Sami with the state authorities have not been and still are not easy. Considerable tension and unresolved disputes still exist between them.

Institutions such as the Sami national parliaments are not a sufficient force to effectively protect the interests of the indigenous community. Therefore, the Sami are trying to change the authorities' position not only through the media but also through the involvement of art in its performative form. This issue is exemplified in this chapter by the project *Pile o'Sápmi* by Máret Ánne Sara, based on the story of Jovsset Ánte Sara, a reindeer herder forced by the Norwegian authorities to decimate his herd. The text analyses the activities of the Sami rebel artist, the material she uses, the symbolism and the sociocultural references. This analysis shows a Sami perspective on key issues at the junction of culture and politics. This perspective is based on the thesis that artistic activity expressed, among others, in the form of *Pile o'Sápmi* can serve as an effective way of opposing and a component of an effective strategy in the struggle for cultural rights of a national minority. The analysed topic is related to the art of performance. What is important is the issue of the performer's actions, aimed at evoking in the observer reactions strongly based on emotions. During the performance, the artist encourages the audience to reflect on a particular subject actively. At the same time, the artist assumes the responsibility that the form of message offered, its structure, expressivity and content will arouse the expected reaction in the viewer. The success of a performance is, therefore, strongly correlated with the cultural competence of both the audience and the artist. The communicative binder becomes the shared knowledge and experience concerning, among other things, their identity, history, tradition, ethnicity or nationality (Carlson, 2018, p. 20; Banaś, 2012).

The performativity of art encourages the search for new ways of interpreting the world, ordering it and giving it new meanings. For researchers of primitive societies, performance was a fundamental element of cultural structure, revealing essential values, symbols and patterns of interaction relevant to a given community (Turner, 1996; Geertz, 1973). In the case of the Sami, contemporary performance art, based on strongly accentuated ethnonational specificity, becomes not only a community binder but also a tool in the political dialogue with the state authorities. The history of the long and complex relations between the Sami and the state is reflected in the character of the performance, which often contains turpist and anti-aesthetic elements. The aesthetics of ugliness (anti-aesthetic) becomes a principle for the Sami performance. The basis of how the problems are portrayed is the macabre, madness, death and decay, so clearly visible in Máret Ánne Sara's work. By introducing grim symbolism and using materials such as rotten reindeer skulls, broken bones and bloodstained skin, the artist signals the lack of equality in the relations between the Sami and the majority society. What is perceptible here is the violent nature of these relations, in which the majority, unwilling to give up its dominant status, claims the right to decide about the minority. Formal recognition of the subjectivity of the minority community remains futile if it is not followed by practical solutions, including those combating manifestations of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For the latter, performance – also referring to symbolism – may prove effective.

Norway versus Jovsset Ánte Sara

In the first years of the 21st century, in the general public discourse about northern Norway, a debate was initiated on the issue of reindeer herded by the Sami. The official position of the then-Finnmark county authorities was that too many livestock threatened the balance of the ecosystem, so in 2007, a law was modified that significantly affected the way traditional reindeer husbandry was carried out (Lovdata, 2007). In the context of this legal change, the local reindeer husbandry board *Reindriftsstyret* decided that from 2012, the total number of these breeding animals could not exceed 1,700 animals, which was almost 50% of the herd at that time (Larsen, 2018).

Initially, the individual districts in the country's north were allowed to decide on the herd reduction strategy. However, no explicit agreement was reached in the region of Kvaløya in the municipality of Hammerfest. The state, therefore, took the initiative and decided to proceed uniformly in all regions in the Norwegian part of Sápmi. As a result of this decision, in February 2013, the Kautokeino reindeer husbandry board stated that Jovsset Ánte Sara, who had a herd of 350 animals, had to reduce it to 75 animals (Larsen, 2018). The breeder appealed this decision. In the second half of 2013, the case went to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's *Landbruksdirektoratet*, which dismissed the complaint. However, the legal dispute continued. The Sami breeder sued the Norwegian state, winning in two instances: the district court and the appeal court. The breeder, in turn, lost in the Supreme Court, *Norges Høyesterett*, which was approached by the Norwegian authorities through the Ministry (Larsson and Paulsen, 2018). The breeder's response was to appeal the decision to the UN Human Rights Committee for the institution to issue an opinion on the right of minorities to live a traditional lifestyle and farm based on centuries of tradition. Jovsset Ánte Sara argued the objection on the grounds that the Norwegian state ignores cultural heritage and harms the interests of the Sami people. Referring the case to the United Nations, Sara stressed that the decision of the Norwegian Supreme Court violated human rights because it violated the right to active, real – and not just declared – concern for the Sami heritage, in which the reindeer has an exceptional cultural and economic significance (Larsson and Paulsen, 2018). Without waiting for a UN decision, the Norwegian authorities threatened the breeder with a fine of 600,000 crones (ca. 99,000 US dollars in 2013) and then referred the case for debate in the parliament (Larsen, 2019; Pettersen, 2018). Until the second half of 2019, the Sami breeder continued to face penalties for not complying with the court's ruling. Eventually, Sara entered into an agreement with several Sami breeders, through which he transferred the "surplus" animals to them, thus avoiding the compulsion to reduce the herd (Larsen, 2019).

The reindeer husbandry council, *Reindriftsstyret*, in agreeing with the Norwegian authorities' position, acted against the person it was de facto supposed to protect. At the Council meeting in February 2019, its members voted on the case

of Jovsset Ánte Sara. The unfavourable decision for the breeder was taken in an incomplete composition. Instead of seven people, only four members of the *Reindriftsstyret* arrived, voting against the breeder (Ibid.). The vote was controversial as Sara's case assumed national importance, provoking extreme emotions from the Sami community and the majority of society.

An institution important to the Sami community at a crucial moment failed in its mission, as four of the seven members of the *Reindriftsstyret* are appointed by the Norwegian parliament and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food while three are elected by the Sami parliament in Norway (Reindriftsstyret, 2021). In July 2019, the composition of the *Reindriftsstyret* was changed. This time the Norwegian Association of Sami Reindeer Breeders participated in the election of the new members. The story of the breeder's struggle highlights the problem of a lack of solidarity among parts of the Sami community. Endogenous Sami relations are not fostered by a sense of uncertainty about the future of the areas inhabited by the Sami; this maybe because the community is a diverse cultural mosaic made up of hunters, fishers, herders, ranchers, merchants, artisans, some nomads and semi-nomads (Pawełko, 2019).

The case of Jovsset Ánte Sara is essential for understanding the importance of ethnic culture (in this context, livestock culture) in the harmonious functioning of minorities in the majority society. For the Sami, an essential element fostering individual and collective identity is the closeness to nature, the continuation of tradition, living language and memory of ancestors, which manifests itself, among others, in taking up traditional professions (e.g., reindeer herder). Numerous studies of Sami communities indicate that limiting the possibility of continuing culturally established entrepreneurship has adverse effects on the psychophysical condition of the individual as well as the community (Hassi et al., 1994; Kaiser et al., 2010, 2013; Kaiser, 2011; Jacobsson et al., 2015). Similar phenomena have been diagnosed in other Arctic regions (Greenland, Alaska, Siberia), where younger generations of indigenous people engaged in traditional ways of life face depression, social exclusion and increasing suicide rates (Dąbkowska, 2014). For example, the Inuit community in Canada in 2016 had one of the highest suicide rates in the world, especially among the younger part of the population (Kral, 2016).

Pile o'Sápmi installation

Máret Ánne Sara (born 1983) has been active in art since 2003. Her artistic activity is closely connected with her nation's history and cultural heritage. She expresses it through various performances, installations, performative events and literature (the novels: *Ilmmiid gaskkas* and *Doaresbealde doali*).

Her work is dominated by motifs referring to painful issues: postcolonial trauma and the difficulty of finding one's place between mainstream society and the minority. Máret Ánne Sara shows the indigenous perspective, commenting through her works on the oppression of the Norwegian authorities towards the Sami people. In her projects, she addresses the dilemmas of external interference

in the Sami heritage, tradition, culture and physical interference of the state in the territory they inhabit. The artist also draws attention to the internal stratification, a "crack" in the community. This stratification is confirmed by the case of her brother's long-running court battle.

The first instalment of Pile o'Sápmi, based on elements of slaughtered reindeer, took place in February 2016. The artist created an installation in front of the court building where the trial of her brother, a reindeer herder who disagreed with the culling of nearly 80% of his herd, was taking place. The artist's work consisted of a pile of 200 severed reindeer heads topped with a Norwegian flag. Máret Ánne Sara called the installation Pile o'Sápmi, alluding to the situation of native Americans in North America where, in the second half of the 19th century, the US government decided to decimate the buffalo herds – animals so crucial to the culture and existence of the indigenous people.

According to the colonisers, buffalo slaughter was to help combat 'primitive' practices associated with native culture (Phillips, 2018, pp. 24–25). Nineteenth-century generals encouraged buffalo hunting by proclaiming that 'every dead buffalo is the death of one Indian' (Phillips, 2018, p. 25). Similar rhetoric was supported by missionaries, including John McDougall, who wrote of the Blackfoots that they were entirely dependent on buffalo herds to provide the elements necessary for independence from the state. According to the white colonisers, the natives, like their buffalo herds, were an obstacle to the "civilisation" of the continent. Between 1872 and 1874, some three million buffalo were killed in Kansas alone (Phillips, 2018, pp. 24–25). The carcasses of animals during this time were often dumped at crossroads, forming numerous piles. One representative of the Cree tribe noted:

> [T]hey took our land, they plundered our soil; they would have killed the last beaver if they could have found it; they destroyed the buffalo that was our food and took everything they could sell. They left only the bones, but wait and see what comes next; as soon as they find out how to sell them, they'll be back to get the bones too.
>
> (Phillips, 2018, pp. 28–29)

At this point, we reach the origin of the term used by Máret Ánne Sara. In her first installation, Pile o'Sápmi, the Sami artist made a direct reference to colonialism and neo-colonialism. The message was further strengthened by the fact that the reindeer heads used in the installation were still fresh, unskinned and showed traces of blood. The turbulent installation became here a means of arousing extreme emotions in the viewer, particularly the Norwegian officials, employees of the state institutions and state authorities. The artist commented on the project in this way:

> [M]ost central for me is the spirit and energy of land, animals and life. For me, these bones have a very strong energy. When constructing the first pile in

> 2016, I was astonished by how powerful this energy was, because these were real heads, of animals that were living and wandering among us.
>
> (Schippers, 2020)

Pile o'Sápmi's installation was meant to highlight that the history of exploitation of indigenous communities continually repeats itself – regardless of place or era.

Further unveilings of Pile o'Sápmi

In December 2017, Máret Ánne Sara created another installation in the form of a curtain made of 400 reindeer skulls. She used the heads of 200 animals that were previously part of Pile o'Sápmi in 2016. The installation's timing coincided with the anticipation of the UN Human Rights Commission's decision on the reindeer herds belonging to Jovsset Ánte Sara. The curtain was in front of the Norwegian parliament building in Oslo on the Eidsvolls Plass for two days. This representative place for the state, the parliament, symbolises democracy. The Eidsvolls Plass is considered one of the country's most important arenas for freedom of speech (Stortinget, 2021). Sara's work introduced an element of restlessness into the static walls of the state building, altered by the context and contrast of the city streets decorated with festive symbolism, heralding the upcoming Christmas holidays.

The installation was supported by a frame that created the impression of a picture and a theatre stage at the same time. A metal rod, placed horizontally a few metres above the ground, supported 38 hanging ropes with attached reindeer skulls (from 10 up to 13 in each row). All artefacts had visible bullet holes in the frontal bones, which caused the animals' deaths. The skulls were stripped of antlers, skin and soft tissues. As a result of the process of decomposition of the body, the artist exposed all natural holes, where a few weeks ago, there were eyes, ears and nose. The artefacts used by the artist presented various states of biological decomposition; some of the skulls were light in colour and had a complete skeleton while others had a dark tint and a distorted and deformed structure. In addition, with every stronger gust of wind, the installation emitted sounds produced by the skulls bumping against each other. The audiovisual specificity of the work provocatively combined the truth about existence – its temporality, suffering, death and ugliness as the final result. The physicality, the brutality of life and the offensiveness of the anti-beauty strengthen the turpistic character of the artistic endeavour.

On the day the installation was unveiled, Máret Ánne Sara met with representatives of the Norwegian parliament – Stortinget. She stood in front of them in *gákti* costume, holding a document with 5,000 signatures from people around the world in support of Sami's work. At a meeting with parliamentarians, the artist said:

> [T]he decisions taken by the Stortinget are chilling – without a shadow of accountability, decisions with very serious consequences for people are implemented. I ask that such political actions are not allowed in Norway . . . You are in charge. You are responsible for the fate of the people, for the law

> in this country, for the culture of the Sami people and for the work for Sami rights that has already been done. . . . Do not think that abuse can be hidden in the systems, even though you have the legislative, executive and judicial power here. Good is still good, evil is still evil, and the world sees this.
>
> (NRK, 2018)[1]

The theatricality of Sami-Norwegian interaction exemplifies post-modern social drama (Schechner, 1976; Turner, 1996). Methods derived from theatre are used to foster social action aimed either at the social change necessary for the functioning of the community or at the preservation of the status quo of interaction patterns guarding community existence. Theatrical action is initiated by a charismatic individual stemming from the group. This action is a prerequisite for accepting proposed solutions relating, for example, to how things are perceived, given meanings, interpreted, managed and formed. In this way, a special corridor is established between two spheres: "the real and the social" and "the social and the aesthetic." Social acts and actions can, therefore, fluctuate between one sphere and another (Schechner, 1976, p. 12).

In the case of Sami, this flow of social action increasingly takes the form of contestation. Máret Ánne Sara highlights here an important problem, which has also been noticed by researchers, concerning the future of democracy, which depends not only on state institutions and the political system as a whole but also on the degree of civic involvement in grassroots contestation-activist movements (Jonsson, 2021, p. 3). As Chantal Mouffe notes, social antagonism in the form of political protest is a natural and inherent element of contemporary democracy (Mouffe, 2005). The problem is, however, that many minority groups, including cultural or ethnonational groups, do not have their representatives directly participating in representative democracy, which in consequence, leads to the accumulation of resentments and, in the long run, to antagonism and even hostility. A trail of his antagonistic character can be spotted in another instalment of Pile o'Sápmi's project – *Gielastuvvon* from 2018. In the project, the artist presented an installation of lassos used by Sami herders daily to tame animals. Sara modified the meaning of these artefacts by creating a noose from each of them. The lassos became oppressive tools to ensnare and deprive life. The artist explains the meaning of the installation in the following way:

> Whereas the political structures have been my main subject in earlier works, in *gielastuvvon* (snared), I am addressing a more personal side of the story. As I witness the personal costs that we suffer only for defending our existence, as I feel the distress of losing life as we know it facing an unknown future, I feel a need to address the structural neglect of humanity in state politics and laws regarding our lives as indigenous and as people. I hang the lassos here in honour of our herders who are not only maintaining their reindeer but also a living Sámi culture. Secondly as a reminder of the fragility of culture, people and life.
>
> (Sara, 2018)

The lassos were made of flexible plastic, with a light colour contrasting with the symbolic meaning of the installation, alluding to the weight of human beings. Each lasso was a real tool previously used by Sami herders, which supported the authenticity of the message, linking the experience of the breeders with the feeling of the viewers. This link allowed the artist to anchor the message in authenticity, a category fundamental to human cognition and experience (Heidegger, 1994).

> The worn out lassos show as well the physical hardship of basic survival, relying on the untamed and natural. In my opinion, the choice of a traditional life in today's capitalistic and industrially expanding societies, is a deep personal, cultural and to some extent a spiritual commitment. This primitive tool is for me a strong image of the hardships of people living in and with the wild and natural, echoing a constant and accelerating battle against the growing capitalistic societies surrounding us with intentions of never ending "development" and growth, not compatible with sustainable thinking nor traditional livelihoods.
>
> (Sara, 2018)

A viewer from outside Sami culture will see the heaviness and temporality of life here. On the other hand, an insider will see the many layers of meaning woven from centuries of Sami tradition, collective memory and identity persisting over time. The installation becomes a symbol of the concrete stories and experiences of the Sami people.

In Máret Ánne Sara's work, the basic feelings she refers to are fear, anger and determination to fight for one's culture and nation. They appear regularly, almost obsessively, in the successive scenes of the project. The characters in her collages bend in spasms, scream in despair and fall into madness. The figures in the works wear Sami symbols, *gákti* costumes, *duodji* handicrafts and national colours, which the drawings and collages are saturated with – red, green, blue and yellow. Skulls are a frequent motif, both real animal skulls and drawings of human skulls replacing faces. This motif can be interpreted as a direct reference to eugenic practices in Scandinavia in the first half of the 20th century (Banaś, 2019, p. 303).

In the collages, figures in *gákti* costumes are combined with images of dead reindeer. The female figures scream in despair (a reference to Edvard Munch's famous painting, The Scream) while clutching a Sami shawl over themselves like a straitjacket. The titles of the works – despite depicting a variety of scenes – often contain words such as madness, despair, dejection and hopelessness. Numerous naturalistic themes are metaphors for the wounds inflicted on the community. Here, the display of ugliness illustrates Sami's vision of modernity, embedded in fear and progressive decay.

The artist directly references the actions of Norwegian authorities against the Sami people, as evidenced by one of her collages depicting a modified coat of arms of the Kingdom of Norway. Oneiric and surrealistic elements are noticeable here. In addition to the golden lion with a silver axe, Sara added a knife-wielding

reindeer to the state coat of arms. Sharp objects are unambivalent – in this context, they serve only to invade and destroy. The motif of a Norwegian lion fighting a Sami reindeer on a field filled with catenaries is present in her works in various configurations. The collages are dominated by power poles, high-voltage cables and silhouettes in black suits holding briefcases with handles resembling a human mouth. The constant, almost compulsive depiction of turpist motifs emphasises the personal, emotional nature of the works and the strong connection to the artist's personal experiences, as evidenced in the following words:

> [C]oming to Oslo it becomes even more dramatic, from my perspective. This colonial violence that I am addressing, that is hidden behind neatly and cleanly written laws and paragraphs, is much harsher, is much more apparent. It was very important to highlight these oppositions, this violence.
>
> (Schippers, 2020)

How do government representatives address this problem? The other side of the conflict, the Norwegian state, asserts that controlling the number of animals in herds is an action to protect indigenous culture through sustainable pastoralism (Ross, 2018). Although strongly contested by the majority of Sami, this argument nevertheless finds understanding among some members of the group. According to the artist, the reindeer herding system is designed to deepen internal divisions. Specially constructed legislation fosters internal competition among the herders, which in turn affects not only the economic and financial aspects but also the cultural ones. Growing animosities lead to conflicts that the common heritage cannot resolve. In addition, problems of mutual trust among members of the Sami nation exist (Schippers, 2020).

The lack of unity among the Sami was depicted in the collage *The Norwegian Hunger Games* (2016). It features four people. One of them, with his face obscured by a balaclava in the colours of Norway, is pointing a gun at a man dressed in *gákti*, who in turn is firing a gun at a Sami standing next to him. The latter holds two pistols in his hands and aims at a Sami child and a Sami reindeer. The artist accentuates the mechanisms connected with the ancient principle of *divide et impera* applied by the hegemon with the aim of economic, social and cultural exploitation. This oppressive attitude of the state is reflected in Sara's works, full of negative emotions and shocking expressions due to their turpistic character.

Conclusion

The Pile o'Sápmi' series is an example of protest against the state's oppressive power and the struggle for the cultural rights of minorities. The art's turpistic and anti-aesthetic character has been chosen by the creator as a strategy to reach the minds of the politicians and change their decisions but also as a notion addressed to mainstream society. The selected works by Máret Ánnet Sara showed the

determinism in protecting the genuine culture of the minority, where the economic aspect constitutes its significant part. Thus, the culture here goes beyond the common narrow understating of the concept. Indeed, the struggle undertaken by Sara and performed via artistic expression is de facto a struggle for the right to be a Sami. This struggle can be categorised as an activity in a postcolonial space, where unequal power distribution is covered by democratic institutions, political discourse and language (Spencer, 1997).

Through her work, Sara proposes a counter-discourse, in a counter-language, genuine, reflecting the state of the mind and soul of the majority of Sami. The artist accentuates issues fundamental to the survival of the community, identified at two levels:

(a) at the state level: interference in the way the Sami people function in Norway, imposing the way reindeer husbandry functions, staffing institutions (essential for husbandry) with people not connected to Sami culture, latent neocolonialism, and
(b) at the level of the national minority: internal conflicts among the Sami and emotional problems (depression) connected with the difficulty of finding oneself between the majority and minority culture.

Máret Ánnet Sara, through her artistic work and public activity, became a defender of the minority, of those who are vulnerable and fragile in the asymmetrical relation with the state, in this case, a democratic state. The aesthetics of the democratic order represented in the law, institutions and procedures was contrasted with the anti-aesthetic, grassroots postulates stemming directly from the need to defend what is authentic, autochthonous and indigenous.

Note

1 Translation from the Norwegian by the author.

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Chapter 10

The wind of protest goes . . . and then returns

Feminist movements in Italy from the 1970s to the 2020s

Ignazia Bartholini

Introduction

As della Porta and Diani tell us that "since the 1960s, social movements, protest actions and, more generally, political associations that are not linked to parties and trade unions have become an almost stable component of Western democracies" (della Porta and Diani, 1997, p. 13). This is probably a consequence of the progressive thinning of public space as a result of the so-called colonisation of Lebenswelt (Habermas, 1981a). The historical social movements – from the workers' and peasants' movements to the more recent ones in Italy that accompanied the liberation from fascism – had progressively lost their conflictual charge due to their integration into the political system through the intermediation of parties and trade unions. Twenty years later, in the 1980s, the defence of space for protest became necessary for the construction of a space for "communicative action" capable of placing itself on the fault line between the social system and "Lebenswelt" (Habermas, 1981b).

Historically, the study of social movements has been divided between materialist and idealist orientations and has often proposed one-sided readings of the phenomena studied. Movements have therefore been explained as:

(a) the effects of crises or contradictions in the social system. In the 1970s and again in the 1990s in Italy, the focus of women's and feminist movements,[1] also marked by class conflicts, was on concrete and institutionalised dimensions of female oppression, including the impossibility of obtaining a divorce or abortion (1970s) or the difficulty of breaking the "glass ceiling" by attaining top positions in the world of work (1990s) (materialist or hyperstructural perspective);
(b) the product of shared individual motivations and goals. In the 1980s and again in the first decade of the 2000s, the focus of feminist movements was more on the need to guarantee individual freedom to choose whom one wants to be and to develop one's capabilities independently (idealist approach).

Although in both cases, the interest (of the few or the many stakeholders or in general of the wider community) lies at the heart of movements, it is the recognition

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of one's interests or the interests of a party as common interests by the individuals involved that makes it possible to identify a movement carrying out collective action. Subjects participating in a movement meet each other as "individuals" and, at the same time, as members of the same social life form, which is distinct from other life forms. When the interest is perceived as common, all participants in the action have also shared some of the basic values that disregard the interests of one party or the other, leading advocacy to become an agency. While the push factors of a collective action that turns into mobilisation are indeed actions aimed at a goal, they take on fundamental values such as the dignity and recognition of the human being, especially today. In other words, by joining a movement, they make it possible to create a community.

A social movement is a form of collective mobilisation based on instances of social justice. In the same way, women's and feminist movements base their actions on instances of identity, overcoming the gender subordination of women and asserting rights that compete with the specificity of "being women."

Especially at the beginning of the 2020s, women's and feminist movements were not limited to new material demands but aimed to challenge dominant representations of social, political and cultural action. They revolved around issues of gender imbalance, sexual discrimination and violence – which were contextualised. For these movements, the interest in the individual and the development of their capabilities were prevalent.

The criteria of social belonging and stratification and the consequent claims to provision and entitlements (Dahrendorf, 1959) gave way to the paradigms of gender, one's level of education, individual freedoms inherent to the private sphere and ethnicity. Thus, the Marxist interpretation was no longer suitable for the deterministic-economic understanding of new feminist mobilisations.

Unlike the social movements that have been formed since the 1960s as a result of the thinning of public space and the colonisation of the "Lebenswelt," feminist movements requested a public space that has not been obtained until then. For women's movements, public space and lifeworld overlapped and were equally claimed because women demanded the right to express their intimate needs with their gender rights. At the base of these feminist movements, there is the recognition of the human person and their ability to promote him/herself, as well as to act freely according to their will and ability (with social rights placed before political rights). The idea of the "threshold of capacities" expressed by Martha Nussbaum (2001) can be traced back to the feminist movements' constant attempt to allow universal access to the threshold beyond which every human being has an equal chance to exercise their right to exist and flourish.

Politics, policy and polity of feminist movements in Italy

A movement is to be understood primarily as a vehicle for the mobilisation of collective resources and oriented actions; it is, therefore, a major element of the

political process (Lipsky, 1968; McAdam, 1982; Piven and Cloward, 1979; Tarrow, 1967; Tilly, 1986). At the same time, a movement is also, in a Habermasianly way, a form of aggregation capable of restoring and rebalancing social integration at new levels of differentiation and individualisation. It pushes out needs that would otherwise be caught in the meshes of an already structurally organised political system.

In movements, the first dimension is that of *politics*, which relates to the ways of building consensus and the ability to attract as many people as possible to a political project. It concerns strategies that catalyse human resources regardless of the calculation of the consequences that a certain politically shared practice will produce.

The second dimension can be traced back to the term *policy*, that is, "public policies," understood as implemented political decisions and action programmes capable of expressing a direction, thanks to the movements operating in the background.

The third level relates to *polity* and indicates the community of actors active in the political sphere and, consequently, the inclusion or exclusion of certain actors. Therefore, it is a question of the recognition of memberships and identities, of the possibility of criticism and dissent within movements.

All three dimensions are present in the feminist movements to which this chapter refers and about which a reconstruction of the scientific debate of the last 50 years is offered, from the 1960s up to cyberactivism and celebrity activism. The reconstruction of the debate is carried out through a systematic review.

In analysing feminist movements from a sociological perspective, the intention here is to identify a theoretical and methodological choice of these fields: that of considering the birth of these movements in the second half of the 20th century as the beginning of a paradigm shift that calls into question all the previous power devices linked to hierarchies and the gendering of knowledge, which until then had had androcentric connotations, thus defining another genealogy of female knowledge (Chiavola Birnbaum, 1986; Cott Nancy, 1987; Leccardi, 2002).

The need to reconstruct women's genealogies also relates to an epistemological issue, namely knowledge is always situated and reflects the views of individuals and groups (Haraway, 1988). Considering that androcentric universalism has produced epistemic injustices helps to unveil the many occasions when scientists and scholars have been negatively affected by prejudices and sociocultural constructions regarding gender roles.

Feminist genealogies give impetus to the movements by indicating a point of no return in the separation of the aesthetic and erotic capital of the female body from its commercial capital – based on prostitution and reproduction – to which it has often been subjected.

It, therefore, seems necessary to consider the relationship between feminist movements and the production of new forms of the intelligentsia while identifying the emergence of models, actions and practices.

Two steps forward: 1960s–1980s

The existence of a movement is a necessary but not sufficient cause for generating public action (Corradi and Stöckl, 2016). Weldon emphasises that a movement must be strong (organised and united), autonomous, that is, free from the influence of political parties and trade unions, as these groups are gender-neutral stakeholders defending their respective interests while the women's movement can establish a privileged dialogue with policymaking agencies particularly dedicated to women's issues. Strong, autonomous women's movements and effective women's policy agencies reinforce one another. This is not purely additive; it is interactive (Weldon, 2002, p. 141).

The recent history of feminist movements can be traced back to the mid-1960s, and it ended in the mid-1980s (Echols, 1990; O'Laughlin, 1999). Two factors, in particular, contributed to this: the birth of the black civil rights movement, which had begun in the United States, and "the first demonstrative actions against the dark repression of blacks by the white population" (Lussana, 2012, p. 16).

In the United States, the voice of Angela Davis, who would become a living symbol of the fight against racism and sexism and is still considered one of the most important exponents of contemporary feminism, stands out among them all. From the *black movement* in America, feminism borrows the practice of Consciousness Raising, that is, self-reflection on one's condition, separatism, Sisterhood and, finally, "the enhancement of one's diversity" (Lussana, 2012, p. 16). In 1966, the NOW (National Organization for Women) was founded in the United States, while the same year, following the spread of American feminist texts, the first collective, the DEMAU (Demystifying Authoritarianism) group, was founded in Milan, Italy.

Feminist movements have been the main proponents of grassroots pressure on institutions in Italy and the United States. For feminist movements – in America as in Italy – this has not meant accompanying their action with the support of political parties but towing political forces along by being the "bridgehead" of the protest. As Rutter (1990) stressed – although most Italian feminists tend to consider political elements as intimately connected to cultural ones, they do not seek an alliance with political parties and claim the autonomy of their agency. Consequently, Italian feminists such as Teresa de Lauretis and Dacia Maraini do not see individual efforts as separable from collective ones. De Lauretis argues that post-structuralist (mostly male) feminist theories only allow for a representation of hypothetical women whereas a feminist theory must "constantly return to a collective reflection on practice, experience, the personal as political and the politics of subjectivity" (p. 26). Maraini's popular writing illustrates this awareness that "the micropolitical practices of everyday life and resistance offer both agency and sources of power" (p. 29). Feminist theories can be based only on women regarding their individual, material and historical specificity.

The second factor is to be found in the 1968 mass movements that affected almost all countries in the Western world, including Italy (Kantola, 2006; Charles

and Mackay, 2013; Corradi and Stöckl, 2016). The demonstrations at the end of the 1960s mobilised not only an extremely heterogeneous range of people (students, workers and minority ethnic groups) but also, and above all, women. In those years, Italy was a country marked by a profound economic crisis, as well as by political unease involving different groups and revealing the contradictions and limitations of economic and cultural models based primarily on the interests of the middle classes and on a culture influenced by traditional and often old-fashioned fascist models. It is women who pay the price in cultural terms and the weaker social classes in economic terms.

It is precisely from the general perspective of analysing the cultural and political devices that guide the behaviour and customs of the middle class that the criticism of patriarchy makes its way. This criticism concerns, above all, "a specific area, that relating to the sphere of sexuality, within which we can identify not only the origin of discrimination between the sexes but also the signs of female complicity in such discrimination" (Calabrò and Grasso, 1985, p. 43).

Women took on a collective profile; they formed a group and acquired a public identity. Public opinion began to deal with "women's voices" and the demands of the female universe. They were therefore making their voices heard for the first time in Italy to repeal/amend those criminal laws considered discriminatory against women and mobilise the streets on several occasions: for the abolition of non-attributability for the so-called crimes of honour, for the amendment of the law against sexual violence, to be configured as an offence against the person (the Rocco code described the crime of rape as an offence against public morality), for the approval of the law on abortion and then equal rights at work.

In those years, the case of Franca Viola, the daughter of Sicilian farmers, who was kidnapped and raped at the age of 17 by Filippo Melodia, a member of the powerful Mafia family, aroused conscience. The kidnapper had subsequently offered her a "rehabilitating marriage," and the girl refused it, leading to the trial and conviction of the rapist, who would have gone unpunished if Franca had married him. Refusing a reparatory marriage in 1965 in Sicily was an act of great courage. No young man would have married a girl who was not free and who was blamed by the whole community for refusing a rehabilitating marriage. However, it was precisely because of Franca Viola that feminist movements made a common front throughout the country, unleashing the press, invoking the support of left-wing parties and even some Catholic intellectuals.

The achievements of the feminist movements in those years significantly changed family law: women were recognised as having administrative autonomy, the concept of "parental authority" was set aside, and the right to divorce was recognised. Law 194 on conscious motherhood was also established, which did not decriminalise the termination of pregnancy but established the criteria according to which women could make decisions regarding their bodies. However, the achievements of feminist movements were not matched by a real strategy of the Italian state to tackle the prevailing economic crisis and the needs of the weakest in society. This also had repercussions on subsequent developments of the

feminist movements. The rights recognised on paper were not accompanied by adequate social policies to guarantee these rights.

The following decade of the 1970s in Italy was to be the "Years of Lead," marked not only by protest movements of workers and students but also by terrorism and the start of a series of violent actions that bloodied streets, squares, universities and the headquarters of institutions. Terrorism and the "Years of Lead" that followed were one of the most devastating aspects of the failure of government institutions to meet the demands that feminist movements (as well as student and workers' movements) had put forward in the previous decade. Terrorism was the most devastating consequence of the disconnect between the demands of society and the institutions. The armed struggle seemed to give voice to the social unease and to the rights which were not recognised, except in a theoretical way.

The second feminist wave was historically fixed in these years that come close to the decade of the great women's square protests. Women's and feminist movements thus entered a temporary state of quiescence, of "abeyance" (Houvouras and Carter, 2008; Charles and Wadia, 2017; Aune and Holyoak, 2017), which would correspond to their withdrawal from forms of protest coinciding with violence against representatives of institutions. This withdrawal from the public arena and the search for greater reflexivity, which pushed feminists to analyse and study in self-reflection groups rather than the preparation of public demonstrations, marked the second phase of feminism. Public demonstrations were thus replaced by reflection within collectives, associations and organisations that continued to keep the identity of feminism alive. Feminist movements would find in group self-management an organisational form most suited to their needs (many small groups and collectives of women separated from men, without hierarchies). Feminist activism in this period, in fact, turned towards more autonomous spaces, having suffered forms of discrimination even within the groups of the political left and/or was associated with that of other social movements.

The term "cultural feminism" was therefore used to refer to the birth of new magazines such as *DWF* and *Memoria*, as well as women's libraries and documentation centres. Study and research became a common trait of feminism that reflected, matured and decided to have a capillary impact on the small surrounding realities – "feminism laboratories." This was the case of research cooperatives (Lenove), of the Diotima philosophical community (University of Verona), of the Italian Society of Historians and, again, of groups of women involved in associations such as the "Houses of women" or "Centres against violence."

In the 1980s, it was these "oases" of the feminist movement that found their place in real spaces of cities, physically embodying themselves in permanent spaces of aggregation and reflection.

The disintegration of the feminism of the squares of the first phase was replaced by a "widespread feminism," meaning by this expression:

> [A] process of awareness that tends to remain within the limits of the subjective sphere of the woman who is touched by it and . . . while deriving from

> external solicitations, from the political struggles of women, it is an identification of themes and problems on which a single woman reflects and from which she elaborates new behaviours.
>
> (Calabrò and Grasso, 1985, p. 146)

Within the self-managed groups of women who identified with the feminist movement, self-awareness was created, a practice free of psychologism realised through confrontation and based on an open debate and analysis of feminist texts (Freedman, 2002). The political subjectivity of each woman was central to how they related to each other, with the slogan "the personal is political" being affirmed in this period. Concepts such as equality, emancipation and parity took on a value all intrinsic to the need for each woman to identify her threshold of equality, emancipation and parity in relation to her personal capacity. Thus, women's studies were born involving scholars from different disciplines and research backgrounds.

From the 1990s to 2020s: two steps forward and one step back – the dance of the feminist movements

As in a dance to the two waves of the women's movement – that of the street protests and that of the birth of permanent gathering places with a "feminist culture and consciousness" – a recessionary phase followed. In the first wave of the 1990s, the cultural and political capital of feminism was placed "in the corner."

These were the years of female profligacy, of success to be achieved "in the old way," which exchanged the erotic capital of women with the social ascent of the same women who were put up for sale; of TV showcases and the power of the image, of the discovery of aesthetic techniques and the scalpel to provide beauty and eternal youth to a female body that constituted a commodity for men. The movement lost its driving force monthly, eventually becoming obsolete. The feminists of the past were considered exasperated witches: why fight when you could get advantages more easily? Why work hard when a smile and exposed *lingerie* might be enough?

The beginning of the third feminist wave was historically fixed in the early 1990s. The expression "third wave" appeared in 1992 in the pages of *Ms*. Magazine in an article by a feminist, Rebecca Walker (Showden, 2009; Aune and Holyoak, 2017). It was coordinated by activists "born after the 1960s and active from the 1990s onwards" (Schuster, 2013, p. 11), that is,

> that group of younger feminists who were not adult enough to be involved in the women's liberation demonstrations of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s but who contributed to the emergence of a new wave of feminist activism from the 1990s onwards.
>
> (Aune and Holyoak, 2017, p. 2)

The social and cultural context of the 1990s was referred to as "post-feminist." Showden (2009) explained that

> the label post-feminist, adopted from 1982 onwards, was used to refer to all those young women who enjoyed the fruits of feminism – greater political rights, better career prospects, education, being taken more seriously – but who therefore believed that the movement's battles had been won.
>
> (p. 168)

There was a real "depoliticisation" of feminist movements (Showden, 2009; Munro, 2013). Collective political action tended towards forms of individualism, emphasising the need to recognise certain rights that distinguish and separate women (rather than bringing them closer together) by social class, age and, therefore, according to the peculiarity of culturally expressed needs, geographical origin and even ethnicity. In the specificity of the demands made by women's groups, a real "generational divide" took place, being then analysed by several authors (Purvis, 2004; Schuster, 2013; Kasana, 2014; Keller, 2016). If, in fact, the slogan of the 1970s in Italy was "the personal is political," used during demonstrations to signify that even very personal decisions such as motherhood or the choice between work and family, had a political valence, now it was only individual choices that had an overriding political character since "the political became the personal" (Houvouras and Carter, 2008; Mendes, 2012; Heyes, 2000), 2000).

Young women admitted that they no longer recognised themselves in the practices and principles of the feminists who had preceded them, perceiving them as distant and often felt "marginalised and excluded from traditional spaces of activism" (Keller, 2016, p. 262). They referred to new values, to new feminism that would recognise the many contradictions of late modernity and embrace its ambiguities.

Young third-wave feminists asserted their new, and sometimes different, concerns, focused globally and were more concerned with the inclusion of gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. They found it highly plausible to "include men and transgender, thus challenging some of the more structural approaches of second-wave feminism, such as radical feminism" (Aune and Holyoak, 2017, p. 5), which perceived men as the main enemy. This wave of feminism was thus characterised by intersectionality and a constant reference to global/pan-national objectives.

In the new millennium, the objectives indeed became global. They included challenges such as access to the internet and new technologies, dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS, child sexual abuse, globalisation, domestic violence, eating disorders and sexual health (Showden, 2009, p. 184).

The advent of the internet and social media led several scholars (Munro, 2013; Cochrane, 2013) to hypothesise the emergence of a fourth wave, one marked by an organisational change in feminist associations but also a disruption in the

communication methods of individual activists. The protagonists of this phase were mainly young women who,

> despite being minimally represented in mainstream political debate and traditional media, use the Internet and social media as a tool that allows them to create alternative publics that serve as spaces for debate, politicisation and as a fertiliser for feminist activism.
>
> (Knappe and Lang, 2014, p. 364)

In the advanced phase of this fourth wave, "the body and the subject once again become the concern of feminist thought" (McRobbie, 2004, p. 256). The general impression was that the progress made previously was cancelled out in the exhumation of models from the past aimed at exploiting the erotic capital of the female body. However, if in the past the exchange goods were marriage or rape and, therefore, one or the other represented the only two ways for men to access women's bodies, now the exchange was between private use of the female body and obtaining a social (as well as sometimes economic) advantage in the public sphere.

These were the years of Berlusconism and of the imposition of the model of the super-sexy woman, super-surgical (breasts, buttocks, thighs, groin, etc.) and available to satisfy male expectations in exchange for advantages of various kinds: women free or not to provide their capital to the powerful – entrepreneur or politician – at the moment receiving all the benefits, as well as the inevitable consequences. Berlusconi provided evidence of a male chauvinist thought process which for some decades had been silenced and which now returned with an arrogant attitude to this historical phase. Therefore, Berlusconism represented the most striking phenomenon of a male chauvinist culture that classified women according to the "erotic capital" at their disposal. The approach had caused a collective outcry when a young woman named Ruby, a regular attendee of the "bunga bunga" parties, was defined by the prime minister himself as "Mubarak's niece" trying to turn his abusive behaviour towards a minor.

These were signs that passed through the new models of the "winning femininity" – alarming indications and symptoms of cultural and political regression with the growing influence of "pop politics." The latter term refers to a situation in which facts and characters, stories and words – belonging to the territory of politics, traditionally synonymous with complexity and self-referentiality – become, thanks to the media (and especially television), familiar realities, subjects of curiosity and interest, topics of discussion, sources of amusement and entertainment.

Consequently, they indicate a weakening of those political–cultural convictions and value orientations that a mature democracy is nourished by and cannot do without, one which had gone through the tumultuous years of feminist struggles and strikes but also the dark years of the armed struggle and attacks on institutional figures. In pop politics, women are relevant actors on the condition that they are attractive to show off and support a male figure's dominance (Mazzoleni and Sfardini, 2009).

For feminist movements, breaking free from this stereotype became absolutely necessary also from the hyperbolic stereotype of the glacially cold career woman corresponding to the many "women who support female superiority, hate men, discriminate on the basis of gender, have negative personal characteristics and are lesbian and masculine" (Houvouras and Carter, 2008, p. 236).

This complex stereotype influenced the collective understanding of the genders' roles and might have negatively affected female emancipation in general. However, the model of a "masculinised," asexual, ineffective woman was contrasted by the counter attitude – a woman aware of her erotic capital, obtaining personal advantages and, above all, advantages in the public sphere. This model of a woman as a "user of her own erotic capital" outweighs the more traditional and the post-feminist models. The division of public opinion could be exemplified by the case of Nicole Minetti, a Forza Italia councillor in Milan. The politician was seen in public (September 2011) wearing T-shirts with the phrases "I look even better without my T-shirt" or "I'll be good tonight," which caused a chorus of indignation (Formato, 2016). The criticism had, however, deeper roots.

At the end of January 2011, the first of a long series of flash mobs took place while on 13 February, the first significant street demonstration occurred. The slogan shouted from the square was "If not now, when?" inspired by the title of Primo Levi's first book (*If not now, when?*), containing a saying attributed to Hillel the Elder: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And when I am for myself, what am 'I'? And if not now, when?"

The phrase was immediately loaded with a meaning full of urgency, of a Roman sense of combativeness and hope before going immediately viral. The answer was "Now!" and was pronounced in the streets not only by women. Thus, Italy became the bridgehead of a movement called If Not Now When? (*Se non ora, quando?* or SNOQ) – which strongly reaffirmed feminist themes.

Feminism, in organising a widespread protest mobilisation against Berlusconi, also played a decisive role in the initiation of laws and policies against VAW (Violence Against Women). In the week before the 13 February demonstration, more than 51,000 people signed up. The SNOQ blog recorded 23,000 hits a day while Facebook recorded 15,000 (Amabile, 2011). In the months following the demonstration, dozens and dozens of If Not Now When? committees were immediately set up from north to south, as well as on Italy's islands while parallel initiatives were held in London, Paris, Brussels, New York and even Bangladesh.

The apolitical character of SNOQ was declared on the basis of adherence to six integral points which constituted the thresholds of capacity to be recognised and affirmed in all potential forms of agency:

(1) respect for women's freedom, strength and autonomy in all aspects of the individual and collective sphere;
(2) the public involvement of various women's associations and professional women's organisations;
(3) exclusive personal membership of women in parties and trade unions;
(4) political and cultural plurality, including faith;

(5) special focus on teenagers and young adults;
(6) the use of transversal and plural language in communication.

Ni una mujer menos and *The Women's March* were movements officially born in Argentina in 2015 through the activity of a group of journalists, writers, activists and artists who intended to protest against the escalation of violence against women. They took up the verse of the Mexican poet (victim of feminicide) Susana Chávez – *Ni una mujer menos, ni una muerta más* (Not one woman less, not one more dead) – turning it into a collective cry of extraordinary power. The shortened version, *Ni una Menos* would soon spread internationally.

In Italy, the equivalent *Non una di meno* movement took shape on the occasion of the November demonstrations after the highly contested *Fertility Day Communication Campaign* and against the "Pillon Decree." Fertility Day was a campaign organised in 2016 by the Ministry of Health, Beatrice Lorenzin, promoting procreation. One of the advertising posters of the initiative showed a young female holding an hourglass in her hand, accompanied by a slogan: "Beauty doesn't fade. Fertility does."

Although the picture emphasised a model of a young mother (like the Madonna), it produced the opposite result to that originally intended. It ended up shedding a bad light both on professionally fulfilled women and on those who had tried their best without success. The creators of the campaign ignored the fact that not having children often constitutes an obligatory renunciation of women, also given the inadequacy of the work–life balance and the suffering of private pain rather than a free choice (Bartholini, 2018).

The Pillon Decree marked a step backwards in family law as regards the overall guarantees of the right to motherhood, especially for divorced women who were in economic difficulties or who were unable to provide for their child or children the same opportunities as their ex-partners. The law in question represented, in fact, an attempt by the conservative, traditionalist and right-wing Catholic movements to reaffirm the supremacy of the male in the private sphere by weakening the guarantees the Divorce Law provided to women.

The vulnerability of Italian women has also been experienced in other public spheres, such as entertainment, culture and politics. The phenomenon practised on the "public office couches" had been silenced for many years, making it a kind of taboo. It entered into the public discourse on the wave of feminist movements that started in Argentina and spread to Europe and other parts of the world.

The Italian feminist movement against the Pillon Decree and the resurgence of a patriarchal system went simultaneously with the international protests against the violence oriented against women. This time, younger generations came on the public stage abandoning "women's questions" (women's vulnerability, disadvantage in professional promotion, unequal income etc.) in favour of issues relating to the relationship between the sexes, sexuality, motherhood and abortion.

Italian feminists prepared a new manifesto after a consultation involving around 2,000 people gathered in the National Assembly in Bologna on 4 and 5

February 2017, animated by the objective to stop gender-based violence in all its forms. Participants in the movement stressed their support for the anti-violence centres and for the full application of Law 194 on abortion rights and the promotion of women in the labour market (the employment rate of women at the beginning of the 2020s was one among the lowest in Europe). The Manifesto, launched on 8 March 2017, was accompanied by the slogan, "If our lives are not worthwhile, we strike."

The *Non una di meno* movement revived the debate on patriarchy by placing it alongside the dysfunctions of capitalism in an overall perspective ranging from sexual and reproductive self-determination to job insecurity, awareness-raising, male violence as a "cultural phenomenon," also the problems of migration, from femicide to sexism to racism and homophobia.

The link between sexuality and politics, between patriarchy and capitalism, which appeared in the leaflets of the 1970s, reappeared in all its propulsive force in 2020s. This time, however, gender-based violence got a much broader public attention, reflection – and above all – action preventing the abuse of power, both physical and psychological.

Conclusion

The women's and feminist movements in Italy have affirmed the equality of opportunity between genders, progressively identifying – from the 1970s to 2020s – the main obstacles to a regime of equality under the law and personal opportunities.

However, what this chapter intended to stress was how emancipation on the legislative level had not always been accompanied by a real change of perspective in men's behaviour and men's image of women. Violence against women, indirectly tolerated by family law until the 1970s, was constantly intercepted by women's and feminist movements. For them, the law to divorce (1974), to abortion (1978) and, last but not least, the law against violence directed against women (1996) were milestones in the process towards equal access to democracy.

Subsequently, the feminist movements in Italy have contributed to the introduction of a law that stiffens the penalties for the perpetrators of violence against women (Lex n. 69/2019), of the Legislative Decree 198/2006 for the equal opportunities between men and women, and of the law against stalking that mainly concerned women as the main victims (Lex 38/2009).

Feminist movements (and protest movements in Italy in general) have transformed, step by step, the dominant thought that often culturally coincided with "male domination" (Bourdieu, 2002). These protest movements have successfully carried out actions of active vigilance and surveillance against attempts to re-propose forms of male domination and creeping forms of sexual submission. While in the 1970s the movements fought for a free choice for women as related to their private and professional life, in the 2020s, they highlighted the "traps of emancipation," according to which "making a career in the public sphere" presupposed submitting to different forms of male supremacy.

The feminist and women's movements have carried out actions of moral suasion, oriented the actions of reformist parties and accompanied public opinion towards a more egalitarian vision of the rights and capabilities that must be guaranteed to every human being, regardless of their sex and gender (Bartholini, 2020; Nussbaum, 2000).

Women's and feminist movements are therefore responsible for powerful collective actors who can do advocacy and agency at the same time; perform the function of "Minerva's owl"; bring gender competition in the public sphere back to the criterion of recognition of one's capabilities and, finally, demystify sexual abuse where it is proposed as a means to boost one's professional career.

To conclude, the protest movements in Italy, in having supported the individual freedom of women and their rights to develop individual capabilities and disposition, may be seen as a wind of change to bring an end to disrespectful and often counterfactually misogynistic models of the past.

Note

1 In this chapter the terms "feminist movement" or "women's movement" are interchangeably used, the terms often being combined with each other to offer a broader meaning of the emancipatory movements that have guided public opinion and political action in Italy.

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Chapter 11

People power

Dissent and reaction in twentieth-century colonial Malta

George Cassar

Introduction

A group of islands in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maltese archipelago, consists of three inhabited islands – Malta, Gozo and Comino – along with several other islets. Collectively known as Malta and its people as Maltese, the archipelago has been marked by a colourful and eventful history. Recent studies show that the latest update related to the arrival of the first inhabitants to the islands has been rolled back to around 5900 BC (Malone et al., 2020). From prehistory onwards, the destiny of foreign occupation for Malta was sealed until political independence was achieved in 1964. Indeed, the series of subjections and dominations dragged on unabated for millennia – Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Angevines, Aragonese, Spanish, Knights Hospitallers, French and British (see Blouet, 2004; Cassar, 2000). In these long centuries, the locals breathed servitude, sustained authoritarian rule, suffered injustice and incurred imposition. However, through resilience the islanders managed to accrue over time, they managed to thrive, adapt and take the positive and negative experiences in their stride. As a rule, they kept calm and took life as it came – one may dare say, with resignation – but when the pressure was too much to handle, they rebelled. One may argue that the power and determination of a people are more visible when the challenges to their various needs and aspirations, as also the feeling of affront, are most intense, as may be learnt from the many popular uprisings, rebellions and revolutions that the world has experienced throughout the ages (see, e.g., Graeber, 2022; Kamrava, 2020).

This chapter looks at various manifestations of popular determination throughout Malta's history, where the character of the locals prevails over their daily inflictions. It will further emphasise that these were a preamble and a form of inspiration that invigorated the Maltese towards achieving statehood in 1964. It will argue that two key popular riots in 1919 and 1958 speeded the process towards autonomy and independence respectively. These events somehow forced the hand of the British colonisers as they comprehended what the Maltese were capable of in the quest for their political aspirations.

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A first test

In the Middle Ages, the locals demonstrated popular ferment in a rebellion against their Castilian feudal lord, Gonsalvo de Monroy. In the period between 1425 and 1427, the Maltese, united by a common purpose of resisting impertinent arrogance and outright exploitation, rioted against the perpetrator. They pillaged Monroy's property on Malta, fought his men while blockading them and his wife in the *castrum maris* (the castle guarding the Grand Harbour of Malta), presented their grievances to King Alfonso V of Spain and kept strong even in the face of a royal threat of annihilation. As Frendo (1989a) has so aptly observed, "Maltese resistance to exploitation by Monroy in the fifteenth century must rank as the first major instance of determined and, ultimately, successful opposition to a foreign ruler" (p. 28). This popular uprising showed the Maltese that they counted despite being a vassal nation, generally exploited and their lives and livelihoods rarely valued.

Their determined stand seems to have elevated their significance and admiration in the eyes of their king, so much so that in 1428, Alfonso granted them the *Magna Charta Libertatis*. Frendo (2013) reflects that, in a nutshell, this *octroi* document – a constitution granted by the monarch to his subjects – gave the people of the Maltese islands the extraordinary permission to resist by force of arms, if necessary, any future attempt to grant Malta to a feudal lord. This action could be resorted to as many times as necessary to stop their archipelago from becoming a fife, and these actions, the king conceded, would be considered neither a crime nor a felony, not even an act of disobedience. Indeed, the exceptional grant of such power to the people is very rare. In today's Europe, possibly two cases can be cited that match this constitutional right – Article 20 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020)[1] and Article 21 of the Portuguese Republic constitution (the Portuguese Republic, 2005).[2]

Fast forward to the twentieth century

The twentieth century in Maltese annals may be described as a series of ups and downs, where the people of the archipelago faced the whims and pleasures of a colonising power that used Malta for its imperial purposes while treating its inhabitants as mere servants (in the literal sense of the word) of the Crown. The Maltese were caught up in several disputes – not all necessarily life-threatening, but generally hostile and intense – complicated through long years of festering and trailing back to the previous century. One concerned a long-drawn religious confrontation resulting from fermenting suspicions permeating a predominantly Catholic society governed by a staunchly Protestant master (Bonnici, 1975; Cassar, 2003; Koster, 1984; Laitinen, 2017; Refalo, 2006). Another implicated a dispute, commonly known as the Language Question, where the Italian language – considered to be Malta's language of culture and law by a section of the Maltese educated classes – pitted for its survival in Malta against the English language – held to be the apparent means of communication in schools, courts, administration

and daily life of a British colony by the anglophile Maltese (Brincat, 2017; Chamber of Advocates of Malta, 1931; Cini, 1901; Hull, 1993; Mifsud, 1935). A third involved the political activists and politicians who vehemently opposed the colonial rule, which they condemned for suffocating the people's liberties, rights and aspirations to any form of self-determination, against the local politicians who were comfortable with colonial hegemony, which they considered adequate and acceptable for their country (Frendo, 2012; Pirotta, 2018).

As the twentieth century proceeded, Maltese politically motivated groupings evolved into sturdy and organised political parties. These built a tangible presence while consolidating their standing in the colony. As the *anti riformisti* (transl. anti-reformists – being those that opposed the British administration of Malta) political class was asserting its presence in Maltese society, they were instigating a mounting antipathy against them among the *riformisti* (transl. reformists) or pro-imperialists (Frendo, 1991; Galea, 2017, 2020b; Partit Nazzjonalista, 1972). This political reality was evident in the post-World War One period (Marovich-Old, 2018), a time further complicated by the developing links and sympathy of a section of the Maltese to Fascist Italy and the latter's overtures for more cultural and political closeness and dangerous talk of irredentism that made the British increasingly suspicious and apprehensive (Baldoli, 2008; Kessel, 2016). The local political presence, however, became even further pronounced in the post-World War Two years, when the Italian threat had abated, and the debate regarding political independence and a real and concrete form of self-determination took the central stage, emerging as the main focus of discussion, debate and motivation among local politicians, members of the educated classes, trade unions, the local Catholic Church and its affiliates and other sectors of Maltese society (Pirotta, 2018).

The riots of 1919 – politics, poverty and pride

While the Maltese were generally a peaceful nation, they did have a more aggressive side to themselves, which emerged when touted or instigated. Indeed, they could become difficult, aggressive and quite unrestrained. The 1798–1800 Maltese insurrection against the Republican French forces that had snatched Malta from the Order of St John on 10 June 1798 in a campaign commanded by General Napoleon Bonaparte himself was proof enough of their temper. During two years of fighting, the people of Malta blockaded the French forces that had been left to garrison the island and engaged them in combat wherever and whenever necessary. The Maltese formed village battalions, organised a chain of command and a war council, cooperated with friendly foreign forces and did their best to liberate their country from those they considered undesirable and irreverent towards their beliefs and traditions (Frendo, 1998; Testa, 1997). Many Maltese lost lives in the fight for what they considered a just cause in the name of their country and religion. The locals offered their islands to Britain, and the latter soon took Malta under its aegis.

In the twentieth century, the year 1919 was to become another witness to Maltese agitation and aggression in the face of what many saw as unbearable

injustice, hegemonic strong-handedness, an affront to national pride and basic bread and butter realities. However, further than previous riots and on top of them, this instance was a political marker which was, to some extent, a signal for the future. Indeed, the Maltese, especially those who were more politically motivated, began to consider in more and clearer modes what the colony could achieve if it pressed hard enough. The political class did not look at violence as a remedy; indeed, they did not even contemplate it while arguing in favour of more political autonomy. Others in the streets may have had different ideas and viewpoints, and using force may have been among their thoughts. These would include primarily the workers fearing a precarious future, the unemployed, the many destitute and various "have nots." Two faces of the same reality were evident. World War One had hinted (rather ephemerally and illusively) at change, improvement and progress – after all, was not this conflict described as "the war to end war" (Wells, 1914). Optimistically, Maltese politicians looked at a speedy granting of autonomous government while many ordinary people desperately yearned for that ray of hope to mitigate their immediate afflictions.

What became known as the *Sette Giugno* (transl. Seventh June) riots, as these were sparked on Saturday, 7 June – spilling over to the following three days – showed what people's power in Malta could and did mean. As Legal Procurator and Member of the Council of Government, Joseph Zammit argued on 5 July 1919 (author's transl. from the original Italian speech):

> The serious events of those days were nothing else but a symptom of a disease; disgruntlement was everywhere in the country, and spreading; it changed to irritation; irritation became protest, which degenerated into rebellion. It is no dishonour to have attacked the Governor's Palace . . . the Maltese did the same as what the English ladies had repeatedly done to gain their voting rights; we, if anything, have done it to gain the constitutional rights that we have been demanding for over a century.
>
> (Gambin, 2019, p. 70)

Indeed, the June riots originated from Maltese claims to a decent constitution, which would give Malta control of its internal affairs, finances and other domestic matters. Up to World War One, the constitutional experience of the colony was genuinely bitter. From the official takeover of Malta, the British colonisers played a game of constitutional see-saw with the Maltese.[3] While, at times, the locals were granted constitutions that conceded some leeway in handling local affairs, other constitutions relapsed to the original rigid subjugation through the suffocation of rights and liberties, keeping only the inexorable duties and constraints (Cremona, 1994).

It thus stood to reason that a disillusioned, verging on the angry, crowd was at Valletta on 7 June 1919 to witness and support the second meeting of the National Assembly, which was discussing constitutional demands for Malta. This

gathering of representatives from the various Maltese organisations and institutions was the response to the original call that Filippo Sciberras, one of Malta's patriotic stalwarts, had made in November 1918. This *Assemblea Nazionale* had met for the first time at *La Giovine Malta*, a *casino* in the capital city, on 25 February 1919. On that day, many Maltese had gathered in front of the club to be part of what many saw as a significant development towards Malta's political demands. They had been urged to congregate by Malta's press. However, besides the politically conscious, many others would have needed little prodding given the dire realities which the various classes and sectors of Maltese society were experiencing and the mix of mounting grievances across the social spectrum – university students (Cassar, 2011, 2019), school teachers (Cassar, 2009, 2012), the police force (Attard, 2003), the dockyard workers (Ellul Galea, 1973) and the variously disadvantaged groups among others. The events of 1919 were thus used as a psychological boost for a demotivated nation, which was seeing no other way to relieve the mounting frustration, deprivation and sense of helplessness – political and social.

Though angry, the crowd controlled itself during the February 1919 meeting. Malta had just passed through the difficult years of World War One, a period during which the colony had acted as the medical centre of the region, with the island serving as one whole hospital complex and became known as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" (Mackinnon, 1916; Savona-Ventura, 2005). One consequence of these years was the spiralling prices, pushing up the cost of living, complicated by the scarcity of food and other necessities. The end of the conflict further aggravated the situation by the looming prospect of unemployment – as the demand for manual workers diminished, this required the trimming of the labour supply, which would hit thousands. The people saw their colonisers rejoicing for the victorious end of the war and assisted in preparations for the celebration of the cessation of hostilities and a return to world peace. However, the Maltese would have none of this. They were too irritated, disillusioned and distraught; while they had helped the British in their war effort through many sacrifices, no imperial authority seemed ready to return the favour by addressing Malta's decades-old needs and aspirations. They did not seem disposed to alleviate the more immediate social, economic and political pressures. The newspaper *Il Ħmar* (transl. The Donkey) featured a poem on 17 May 1919 titled "Kegħdin ilestuna għal . . . Festi!" (transl. They are preparing us for . . . Feasts!). The last stanza summed up the rage of the colonised for the coloniser and transmitted to the British, if there was still any need to do so by this time, that the boiling point was close to being reached (cf. Sant, 1989; Xuereb, 2018).

Nagħmlu l-festi? Nagħmlu bomba
Ġo l-istonku iebes tagħkom!
Stmawna l-ewwel sew kif ħaqqna
Wara nagħmlu l-festi magħkom!

(free translation by the author:)

> *Celebrate feasts? What we will do is plant a bomb*
> *in your hard stomach!*
> *First, treat us well as we deserve*
> *then, we will join you in the feastings!*

The phrase "nagħmlu bomba" (literal transl. *we will make a bomb*) is a strong Maltese statement, which declares beyond any doubt and with emphatic language that we will surely do nothing of the sort, and there is no chance that we will retract our decision as things stand. The poem enhances the message further as the author qualifies the reference to the bomb, saying that this will be planted in the hard stomach of the British – a clear allusion to the aggressiveness of the message and an indication of where the Maltese sentiment stood.

The events of the *Sette Giugno* riots have been documented and analysed by many, especially on the first centenary of this momentous happening (Bartolo, 2019; Cutajar, 2019; Frendo, 2019; Mangion, 2019a), indicating that the significance and motivations of the people's actions have continued to elicit interpretation and discussion to this day. It is evident that a good number of Maltese – some for months, others for years – had been craving some form of engagement with their colonial masters. They wanted to catch their attention, bring them to see reason and make them aware of the dire reality of their colony and its inhabitants. The labourer, the teacher, the university student, the policeman, the political activist and the dockyard worker all bore a grudge against the British and their local supporters – including a number of business people who were perceived as profiteering from the rising prices of essential commodities, especially bread, the staple food of the poor. They were thus on the lookout for any sign of defiance on the part of the authorities; while some, without any doubt, yearned for the opportunity to ransack government buildings, factories, offices and other places which they considered suiting their cause – whichever this was – grabbing what could be taken or breaking and destroying what could not. For the demonstrators, such sites were symbols of tyranny and oppression, a source of social and economic suffering and infliction or, more simply, targets for the people to let off the accumulated personal and communal steam. The totems of authority and oppression included the Union Jack flying defiantly on official or anglophile buildings; the armed military and naval contingents roaming the streets imposing control and submission; the houses, factories and shops of merchants and business people owning and managing the flour mills and the island's imports and commodities, perceived seats for the exploitation of the weak and the poor and the pro-imperial press supporting the colonial ideals. In other words, these protests confronted the "haves" against the "have-nots" first in the streets of Valletta but in the following days also in other towns of Malta. Targets of the raging crowd included the Governor's Palace, the University of Malta, the Union Club and the Daily Malta Chronicle, among others.

The Malta Police Force was not considered too reliable by the colonial administration, this being made up of Maltese men with their pending grievances to complicate matters. Their aptitude to control the masses was considered doubtful, to say the least, at that moment in time. The Royal Malta Artillery contingent sent out to hold the rioters at bay did not serve for much either; Maltese soldiers were not ready to fire on their compatriots, whatever their intentions. It thus fell to the British soldiers and marines to instil some order in this hectic and volatile environment. Gunfire was heard as an army lieutenant may have lost his self-control or was overwhelmed with the piling pressure and ordered his men to open fire. Whatever the motive, the outcome was fatal. On 7 June, two Maltese victims fell dead – Emmanuele Attard and Giuseppe Bajada – to be followed during the riots and in the immediate aftermath by another two recognised casualties – Lorenzo Dyer, shot by soldiers in another melee, and Carmelo Abela, bayonetted by marines the following day. Many were also wounded while a further two may have died due to the consequences of the riots (cf., e.g., Galea, 2020a). Claims that at least one more victim may need to be considered as the happenings continue to be debated (cf. Mangion, 2019b).

The collective power of the people – the politically conscious and the more common mortals – gave results which could have taken longer to achieve. Indeed, Gen. Hunter-Blair, who was the officer administering Malta at the time, wrote to his superiors on 13 June 1919, "I have no doubt we shall have to give way and go back on our attitude that until the present Constitution had been tried it would be idle to agitate for a new one," while expressing his regret that it would look "as if we gave in to the riot" (in Frendo, 1991, p. 172).

This *volte-face* helped the Maltese to gain a constitution which, for the first time since the British takeover, opened a window on their political needs, clamouring and aspirations. As Aquilina (2019) has observed, the events of 7 June 1919 and all the mayhem these produced were a catalyst for introducing a proportional representation electoral system that led to Malta's first properly constituted parliament. Malta could now exercise a measure of choice and control on its domestic affairs. Those qualified to do so could vote for candidates from political parties properly constituted and formally recognised by the authorities, and those elected could represent the people, speak and act on their behalf with some authority and a speck of power. For the first time in its history, the island had a cabinet of ministers led by a prime minister. Indeed, the 1919 riots resulted in Malta's gaining its first Self-Government Constitution and its apprenticeship towards political maturity. Nevertheless, the road ahead was still long, entwined and uncertain.

The April 1958 general strike – worker strife and political self-determination

Though the Maltese benefitted from a self-governing political structure for a little over a decade, this period was not deprived of hiccups. The 1921 constitution had, in fact, been suspended twice by the British – in 1930 and 1932 – until in

1933, it was suspended again – a veiled definite withdrawal of the constitution (cf., e.g., Pirotta, 2012) due to imperial concerns about the *Partito Nazionalista* in government refusing to withdraw a money vote for the teaching of the Italian language in primary schools, interpreted by the imperial masters as supporting Fascist Italy's many overtures to the Maltese people (Borg, 1991; Frendo, 1989b). After reverting to a Crown Colony status, the next constitution, granted in 1936, proved yet another disappointment, as the Maltese were once again given a non-self-governing colonial administrative organ. This was followed by the 1939 constitution, which added little to Malta's representative element, considering that for the ten elected members in the Council of Government, eight official and two governor-nominated members were also included (Cremona, 1994). With the onset of World War Two and Malta's high importance to the war effort, especially in the Mediterranean region, local politics, national pride and many other considerations were put on the back burner for the duration of the hostilities. Those Maltese suspected of having a hint of anti-British sentiment were illegally exiled to Uganda (Farrugia, 2007; Soler, 1986) while the rest of the Maltese did their part to defend their island and the interests of the British Empire. As the Maltese were considered to have done their duty so diligently from 1940 onwards, King George VI thought fit to bestow on the colony the George Cross for gallantry on 15 April 1942 (still displayed on the Maltese flag to this day) to "bear witness to the heroism and devotion of its people" (Abela, 1989). Indeed, for some time, the Maltese islands were the most bombed territory in the world, and the populace's suffering was such that their determination and resilience merited admiration and praise (Mizzi, 1998; Wragg, 2003).

Following such a heroic performance – officially recognised by the colonisers through the conferment of the George Cross to the population – it was expected that this acknowledgement would be reflected in a more generous constitution, actually granted in 1947. The constitutional pendulum thus swung back towards the Maltese side as the new self-governing constitution provided for a Legislative Assembly with 40 elected members, chosen for three years through a system of proportional representation. Local political parties were still rather shaky in the immediate post-war decade because the Maltese electorate had to comprehend and act upon a number of firsts – a universal suffrage system which included women, the onus to decide one's future themselves and also to make up one's mind as to which party would best address their needs. Concurrently, the political parties were struggling to find an effective way to convince the electorate about their worth and electability, besides other core considerations. The governments of the legislatures 1947–1950, 1950–1951, 1951–1953, 1953–1955 and 1955–1958 all had particular struggles, shortcomings and weaknesses (Schiavone, 1992). However, they were creating a base and gaining experience for the more robust governments that would administer an independent and sovereign Malta from the 1960s onwards.

For Malta, the post-war years were tough. The war had created the need for more employment and many extraordinary necessities, but as this period now

subsided, the situation turned sour for many, especially for those working at the Malta Dockyard and others supplying and supporting the British forces and their military base on the island. Employees, and the Maltese governments, were expecting the imminent announcement of redundancies. This expectation was in line with the destiny of the United Kingdom, which had practically lost its lustre and superpower status. Many countries in its empire sought and gained political independence while the mother country was in dire economic conditions, forcing cuts and other stringent measures to keep the hard-hit UK finances under control (cf., e.g., Blank, 1977; Crafts and Woodward, 1991). Indeed, with a struggling coloniser, gaining support for a colony would prove very difficult. This, the Maltese were to learn at first hand.

It was during the Labour government of 1955–1958 that the post-war economic reality finally caught up with the Maltese people who were plodding through life to remain afloat. Emigration was seen as one of the more efficacious safety valves by many who thus migrated in droves to countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia (Attard, 1997) while successive local governments, besides promoting emigration, could do little else to alleviate the evident social and economic strife pounding the nation. The dilemma of what to do next now became the key question for every political party that functioned during the 1950s and in the immediate early 1960s. The Labour Party saw union with the United Kingdom as a viable solution to promote Malta's standard of living and upgrade the country through economic equivalence. It thus proposed Integration which included Maltese representation at Westminster. A referendum soon followed in February 1956 – though this was opposed by the local Catholic Church, the opposition Nationalist Party and the pro-British Constitutional Party. A turnout of 59.1 per cent, of which 77 per cent approved the integration proposal, indicated that the Maltese were rather doubtful about this solution for their future. The British seemed to accept the result for the moment, but while they initiated talks on a prospective integration, it soon became evident that their willingness to uphold this prospect became unconvincing as soon as financial matters began to be discussed. The Malta Labour Party, led by Dominic Mintoff, also started to show signs of a rethinking after the referendum vote had passed. Moreover, while the British went along with the prospect of integration and engaged in talks with the Maltese government, they did, however, insert a precondition that any final decisions from their side would be taken only following a general election in Malta (Austin, 1971; Smith, 2007).

The political situation escalated as the Maltese government increasingly realised that, while the British government was asserting that it supported Malta's integration with the United Kingdom, it was not disposed to grant the amount of financial backing requested to help the residents in their immediate needs – indeed, the sum for 1958–1959 would be nearly £1.8 million less than that given the previous year. The Maltese government objected to a reduction of funds but more so to the pretension that it should accept this decision without discussion. This was the peak of insult to the nation, argued Mintoff. In a statement of 21

April 1958, Prime Minister Mintoff's message was clear: if Malta were to accept that the United Kingdom used Malta for its military needs without even a realistic consideration for the local's requirements, then that would have meant that the nation had no spine, no self-respect, no dignity. He concluded that "Is-siegħa tal-prova" (transl. *the hour of truth*) had arrived for the Maltese who had fought the battles of others in the past to show the world that they had grown and become a nation. Mintoff argued that to gain the respect of other peoples, the Maltese needed to show that they were ready to fight for their rights fiercely (Maltese: *qilla*), with greater sacrifice and stronger determination than in the past when they fought the conflicts of others. The Labour leader thus announced that the hour had arrived when every Maltese needed to state by their actions that "Malta għalina tiġi l-ewwel u qabel kollox" (transl. *For us Malta comes first and foremost*) (Mintoff, 1958).

These words, this incitement and these conclusions, were direct results of three years of trying to get from Britain more recognition for the people of Malta. The two main political parties of Malta – the Malta Labour Party led by Dominic Mintoff and the Nationalist Party led by Giorgio Borg Olivier – were somewhat on the same wavelength, even though their strategy may have been different as to how to get there. The similarity of purpose, even the reciprocal, however covert, appreciation of the two leaders, was arguably best illustrated at this time during a resolution presented in the parliament on 30 December 1958. Called the "Break with Britain" resolution, it was moved by Mintoff and seconded by Borg Olivier – in a rare instance of national unity in colonial Malta. This was later followed by Mintoff's resignation as prime minister and the refusal of Borg Olivier to fill his place. At this point, Integration was finally rejected, and the fight for political independence had truly begun (Frendo, 1989a).

This moment in the history of Malta had somewhat been announced by Reggie Miller, General Secretary of the General Workers' Union, when, seeing that the Dockyard discharges would go ahead notwithstanding Britain's supposed support for Integration, he thus proclaimed in February 1958 that:

> The time has come unfortunately when we want to let it known that although we have been ardent followers of Integration we shall not hesitate to throw it overboard and get as vociferous on the other alternative of Independence.
>
> (Micallef Stafrace, 1998)

The prospect of eventual clashes between the Maltese and the British in Malta was also ramping up. The labourites, known for their loyalty to the leader (they were more popularly known as Mintoffians, and many considered themselves such) as also for their determination to the national cause in line with Mintoff's perspective, had already shown intent towards strong-handed protest on 7 April 1958. On that day, an estimated 800–1,000 Labour supporters turned up in Valletta and, albeit reining in their aggressive propensities, showed what the future could bring. Marching through the streets of the capital, they shouted anti-British slogans

while holding posters requesting them to pay up or go home. They also chanted their support for Mintoff and threw some stones, coins and bottles at particular buildings (Pirotta, 2001). The stage was being set for a more decisive and belligerent confrontation.

A national general strike was called for on 28 April 1958 through a coordinated effort of the Malta Labour Party (MLP) and its ally, the General Workers' Union (GWU). The time for decisive and determined popular action had thus arrived. No one was expecting this strike to be a mellow and symbolic protest. The drive for self-determination had built a natural momentum which could be traced from at least the turn of the twentieth century. Plans were laid down efficaciously to make this one-day strike as effective as possible. Men were organised to control the streets, to persuade as many workers as possible not to turn up for work, to see that shops remained closed and to create as many hurdles as possible to public buses, which were the main means for workers to travel. Some also took their initiatives to augment the effect caused by the organised demonstrators. Hundreds roamed the streets and were present in public spaces. MLP and GWU personnel were everywhere to ascertain that the organisation did not break down and intervene where necessary. The Malta Police Force, led by Police Commissioner Vivian de Gray, threw its weight with the British authorities and thus challenged the Maltese demonstrators everywhere. Violent clashes resulted, people got clobbered with truncheons by the police, and many got arrested. A hundred or so of those detained were later arraigned in court; some were given prison sentences (Sant, 1988). The response by the colonial authorities indicated their heavy-handed wielding of power, their intransigence and their resolve to continue keeping Malta under their control. Following these riots, the UK government led by Harold MacMillan suspended the Maltese constitution and reverted to direct colonial rule. This included banning demonstrations and meetings for three months while Governor Sir Robert Laycock's gubernatorial rule meant administering the colony through emergency powers, which was maintained until he ended his term of office in February 1959.

However, the national day of protest constituted one step forward in the trail of events which would now move on to the political sphere and once again taken up by the politicians. The *Partit Nazzjonalista* (PN) under Borg Olivier realised that this event and its consequences marked the LP's abandonment of Integration while inducing it to get closer to the PN's struggle for independence, consequently strengthening the Maltese cause in the process while forming a stronger anti-British front. Moreover, these riots had made the British warier of Mintoff, considering him a great danger to Malta if he won the next election. Through his actions, they considered him "an absolute dictator" who should be halted, with Governor Laycock opining that a solution would be to "offer a new and generous alternative to independence before the next election" (Pirotta, 2001). The violence of April 1958 became a backdrop to future political talks and dealings in the 1959–1964 period, cautioning the British to think their offers well so as not to disgruntle the Maltese too much, as the people had shown their mettle.

Being small, too dependent on an economy related to the military base, having no political experience to bank on, no resources to speak of, no alternative economic plan to sustain a growing and mainly poor population, and so many other tribulations were surely causes of worry, inflicting the population with preoccupations for their own and their country's future. However, the people had spoken through their actions, and Borg Olivier banked on the apprehension for Mintoff's manifestations of protest to push his efforts for complete independence, which he achieved six years later. The shadow of unrest and the prospects of a determined political majority in favour of national emancipation undoubtedly played their part in the ultimate achievement.

Conclusion

The events of 1919 and 1958, along with others – political and social – indicated the people's resolve in the face of affliction, suffering and challenge. This indication was reflected in the actions of the Maltese. They rose, rebelled, rioted and protested against the British colonisers and their tenacity ultimately gained them their political freedom. With this, they also obtained more social stability and economic independence and their status among the free and sovereign states of the world.

The Maltese people have recognised that the *Sette Giugno* riots opened the road towards freedom in 1964. They established this in 1989 by proclaiming 7 June as one of their five national days (Government of Malta, 2021). Undoubtedly, 28 April 1958 was another important instance in the struggle for political independence, and its contribution should be accentuated in the annals of Malta's fight for national emancipation.

Notes

1 Article 20 (4) "All Germans shall have the right to resist any person seeking to abolish this constitutional order if no other remedy is available."
2 Article 21 "(Right of resistance) Everyone has the right to resist any order that infringes their rights, freedoms or guarantees and, when it is not possible to resort to the public authorities, to use force to repel any aggression."
3 Malta was granted 11 constitutions before gaining its Independence Constitution in 1964. These were given in the years: 1813, 1835, 1849, 1887, 1903, 1921 (Self-Government), 1936, 1939, 1947 (Self-Government), 1959, 1961.

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Chapter 12

From the Poor People's Campaign to the Poor People's Campaign

Fifty years of protest in the United States

Mike Kohout

Introduction

This chapter covers the high-profile historical protest period between the late 1960s and the present. The events that bracket this period of intense social and political protest in the United States are the formations of the Poor People's Campaigns (PPC) by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) in 1968 and its resurrection by Reverends William Barber II and Elizabeth Theoharis 50 years later. Just as MLK's PPC successfully linked class and race, today's PPC attempts to link identity movements through class. This is important because of the clear distinction between the objectives of class and identity politics in the United States today. While identity politics seeks to expand the existing system to include those groups left out, class politics seek to transform the system altogether. During the past 50 years, successful identity protest movements became incorporated into the American system because the movements expanded and strengthened the US economy and its social capital without substantively challenging the system's power dynamics and privileges. Conversely, class movements have often been brutally suppressed.

In this chapter, I examine protest in the United States, starting with MLK's PPC, then moving through five decades of identity protest movements organized thematically and ending with today's PPC. Before moving on, I cover two topics in the introduction. The first is a brief overview of protest movements before 1968 to better understand the historical continuity of contemporary protest movements. The second topic deals with the contradictions between the powerful American myth of the right to protest as free speech and the historical process of restricting this right.

Before World War Two, there were several populist movements threatening the American system by challenging its racist, capitalist and imperialist processes. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, exiled European socialists and communists united racially diverse groups of urban workers into the powerful strike and protest campaigns seeking to transform the system (e.g., Johnson, 2020). In rural areas, radical protest movements among farmers coined the term "populism,"

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which meant egalitarianism, despite today's revisionist use of the term to mean the tyranny of the masses (Frank, 2020). These movements pushed for radical changes such as collective ownership of the means of production and popular governance. Along with communist parties, a People's Party was born out of these movements challenging the mainstream corporate parties. These direct and popular challenges to the system frightened the American corporate–political elites, who brutally repressed these movements with police and the army. By the outbreak of World War Two, all radical movements challenging the system had been destroyed and their history largely forgotten. The Cold War and the Communist scare made socialism and communism a threat to national security and turned class politics in the United States into treasonous activity subject to violent repression. The post-war class movements that had swept Europe and its former colonies were suppressed and pacified over a long period in the United States by "red-baiting" and, subsequently, by identity politics. Indeed, the two reasons often given as to why the United States does not have a social welfare state similar to advanced European countries are racism and the suppression of revolutionary dissent (Alesina et al., 2001).

Most American protest movements lack the historical continuity to build more powerful social movements. Therefore, in most cases, protest is used to react to contemporary social problems rather than persistent systemic processes. Most Americans are unaware of their country's turbulent history of social struggle and conflict; a people without historical knowledge is doomed to repeat history. A powerful example is the creation and subsequent destruction of the social welfare state. A century ago, President Herbert Hoover called for restrictions on wealthy capitalists, whom he saw as ruining capitalism with their greed and stating that a progressive society must regulate capitalism, ensuring a high standard of living for everyone (Lind, 2012). These ideas were also at the heart of Roosevelt's New Deal and Johnson's Great Society, creating the greatest middle-class prosperity in US history. Despite this momentous historical progress, most Americans today believe Reagan's reactionary mantra that the government does not solve problems; it is a problem.

Free speech expressed as a protest in the United States is often packaged as the slogan "dissent is patriotic." However, dissent is permitted through specific forms of protest, particularly those that do not threaten the social and economic privileges of elites or challenge the narrow political consensus of a two-party state. The US legal and political system, which enshrines the right of free speech and, therefore, of protest as an individual right, firmly limits the scope of protest as a collective, transformative action. The ruling political party duopoly, the imperial presidency, a partisan and reactionary court system and the massive, militarized state law enforcement apparatus are all obstacles to transforming the system from its march towards corporate oligarchy (Gilens and Page, 2014; Cox Richardson, 2020).

Despite Jefferson's warning that an outdated United States Constitution is dangerous to modern society, today's political elites use it to protect their privileges

by controlling systemic change. Their narrow and conservative interpretation of the Constitution allows them to create legal obstacles to collective protest and deploy the state's powerful law enforcement agencies to violently suppress social movements. They subject Americans to court decisions that have, for the past 50 years, undermined collective opposition to the concentration of corporate and elite power in the economy and government (Cohen, 2020). Worse still, due to decades of conservative, reactionary assault on the social welfare state through the cultish ideology of "personal responsibility," most Americans often blame themselves for failing "to make it." For those Americans who believe the system is flawed and needs saving, the answer is *social entrepreneurship*, a new trend in collective action channelling protest into acceptable institutional norms. Social entrepreneurs have become a new professional community organizing elite working on expanding the system using state-sanctioned methods of political lobbying and "legal" protest events. In the vast majority of cases, NGO funding comes from state and/or private foundations committed to expanding the system to underrepresented groups through bureaucratic stages of commissions, studies, and political and legal action. Collective action in the United States has thus become disconnected from the past, fragmented and commodified mainly by social entrepreneurs and their state and private sponsors. It is within this context that I examine the most significant protest movements of the past 50 years.

MLK's Poor People's Campaign

By 1968, MLK saw that his civil rights victories were not enough. That year he founded the PPC, a class movement to transform American society by confronting what he called the three evils inherent to US capitalism, namely racism, materialism and militarism (King, 1967). Although King had always called for a war on poverty, and economic justice had always been a part of his civil rights campaigns, the PPC was different as it identified American racist capitalism as the source of oppression and barrier to freedom. He grew frustrated after countless unsuccessful attempts to convince the political establishment from both major parties to fulfil the promise of Roosevelt's New Deal and Truman's Full Employment Act to guarantee every American a good job. Most importantly, although MLK rejected Black-only policies in favour of universal anti-poverty policies, he was ignored. He also insisted on economic security being a civil right, something Johnson's War on Poverty did not guarantee. Thus, his "Freedom Budget" called for full employment, good wages, housing, healthcare and a clean environment (Laurent, 2018).

After MLK's assassination in 1968, the movement was undermined by conservative counter-attacks that inflamed American prejudice against the poor by deploying an ideology of "the culture of poverty," which cast the poor, particularly the minority poor, as flawed people (Kendi, 2016). These counter-attacks escalated racist prejudice, violently putting down militant Black urban uprisings protesting MLK's death and the unfulfilled promises of the War on Poverty. The

PPC was labelled a communist threat to the American way of life. The political backlash against civil rights continued with the "Southern Strategy," a concentrated political organizing effort to attract anti-Black white voters to the Republican Party by mainstreaming racist tropes such as "state's rights," "the Moral Majority" and "culture of poverty." The idea was to link the welfare state to undeserving minorities who were unfairly taking advantage of government largesse at the expense of hard-working Southern and Western whites (Cox Richardson, 2020). The counter-revolution to protect the American way of life as a neoliberal system of individual choice and responsibility without social welfare has succeeded and continues to be strengthened by both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Racism

The civil rights era, peaking in the 1960s and early 1970s, was one of the most sustained and successful periods of protest in US history. Inspired by Black militancy and non-violent protests, other minority groups mobilized to struggle against systemic oppression and exclusion. Native Americans formed the American Indian Movement (AIM) to build Native American pride and mobilize it into political action (Warrior and Smith, 1996). Red Power, as activists also called the movement, was dynamic but short-lived, having been crushed by the government. Today, Native Americans are the most impoverished and disadvantaged group in the United States (Regan, 2016). Similarly, Latinos/Hispanics also began to see the civil rights movement as their own. Their rural and urban campaigns, including protests, strikes, boycotts, walkouts and, most famously, Cesar Chavez's pilgrimage across rural California, were inspired by Black non-violent protests in the South. Latino leaders' unified message was that the treatment of their people was "un-American." They used powerful religious and ethnic symbols to build Latino pride and mobilize people to vote, protest and stand up for their rights (PBS, 2013). Both the Black and Latino civil rights movements were successful in making the American system more inclusive. The passing of monumental civil rights laws was a testament to the movement's success. However, after the post-1968 conservative backlash, civil rights movements lost their momentum and became fragmented. Reacting to the lack of enforcement of newly won rights, as well as the lack of economic opportunity in inner cities, the 1970s saw the rise of militant Black (Panthers) and Brown (Berets) power movements. Despite their efforts to confront oppression forcefully and raise their communities by supplying services the state had cut, they were seen as a threat to the system and violently repressed. Although overt racist discrimination in the United States became less prominent because of the movement, structural racism has persisted. A telling example is that over the past 30 years, the wealth gap between whites and minorities (Blacks and Latinos) has increased (inequality.org).

From the 1980s on, immigration took centre stage as the dominant race issue in the United States. Combined with post-Vietnam anti-war protests, a sanctuary

movement formed to protect Central American refugees fleeing civil wars. The US government, which had financed and supported the counter-insurgency ("Dirty") wars in Central America, did not recognize the displaced civilians as political refugees (Paik, 2017). The sanctuary movement initially spread among churches and consisted of an "underground railway" network of people who smuggled refugees into the United States and protected them from the immigration authorities (Chinchilla et al., 2009). The movement achieved some legal recognition for Central American refugees, and its legacy would be revived almost 20 years later as the US government once again escalated its criminalization of immigrants.

Since the passing of immigration reform bills in the 1980s and 1990s, the US government has been criminalizing undocumented immigration. The construction of a wall along the US–Mexico border has become a symbol of the militarization of border and immigration enforcement. The policies, supported by both Republican and Democratic administrations, have failed dramatically as the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States has risen to over ten million people (Massey, 2020). Reacting to their criminalization and the violent policing of their communities, immigrants and their allies began mobilizing mass protests and building movements to put political pressure on state and local politicians to protect their communities starting in the late 1990s. They succeeded in getting many states to pass immigrant-friendly laws protecting people from deportation and treating them as citizens. For example, California has passed a statewide sanctuary law and laws providing social assistance to undocumented immigrants.

In reaction to immigrant movements, anti-immigrant groups and politicians pressured state and federal administrations to ramp up immigration enforcement and pass state laws to persecute immigrants (Voss and Bloemraad, 2011). Caving into the reactionary pressure, the Barack Obama administration deported a record number of immigrants earning Obama the nickname "deporter-in-chief." Towards the end of his second term, under sustained immigration-rights protests and advocacy, Obama reined in some of his anti-immigrant policies, which again emboldened anti-immigrant activists. Their backlash was used by Donald Trump to win the 2016 presidential election. While his administration attempted to carry out full-scale border militarization and immigrant criminalization, they were largely stymied by opposition from activists, as well as the public, who today favour incorporating immigrants into society as opposed to deporting them.

Trump's white backlash policies also revived activism in the African American community. Black Lives Matter (BLM), is essentially a Black power movement organized through social media and decentralized into local chapters, each with its leadership and policy agenda. The movement became prominent during the past seven years after highly publicized police killings of Black people. BLM has put forth policy proposals that include ending mass incarceration, surveillance and police brutality against Black people. It has also articulated proposals for economic justice, political power, community control and reparations for Blacks (Movement for Black Lives, 2016).

The backlash against BLM has been orchestrated by conservative groups, who call the movement a "terrorist" organization and lobby for strong "law and order" policies under the slogan "Blue Lives Matter," referring to the colour of most police uniforms. Additionally, the backlash comes from state-level conservative activists and politicians, who have passed anti-protest legislation in 37 states (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law). BLM has become vulnerable to these attacks partially because it has isolated itself from potential allies by neglecting or refusing to build broad coalitions. Although the mainstream media portrayed BLM protestors as diverse groups, the movement's policies are generally meant to empower Black people only. When Latinx activists tried to use the term Brown Lives Matter, they were labelled as anti-Black by BLM leaders (Szetela, 2020). This is a persistent flaw in identity politics that Black leaders, such as MLK, sought to avoid by creating the so-called rainbow coalitions bringing together diverse organizations and people with common interests (Taylor, 2019).

Materialism (economic inequality)

The United States has the most violent labour history of any wealthy country in the world (Brecher, 1997). Throughout its history, organized labour has been either violently repressed or pacified by corporate compacts favouring conservative and racist unions. Starting in the late 1960s, unions began to democratize, reflecting the progressive race and gender politics of the era. They also became more militant, as evidenced by the massive waves of strikes in the early 1970s (Winslow, 2021). Nonetheless, deindustrialization, the proliferation of "right to work" laws curtailing union rights and a lack of solidarity with increasingly diverse workers in the growing service sector undermined the movement resulting in a dramatic fall in union density in the private sector to less than 7%. Meanwhile, union organizing in the more diverse and politically progressive public sector has held steady at over 30%, despite countless attacks from anti-union interests seeking to outsource and privatize public services.

In 1999, the Seattle anti-WTO (World Trade Organization) protests marked the mainstreaming of community labour organizing a long-held tradition among minority-led unions. This horizontal organizing and coalition building made the Seattle protests successful by integrating previously siloed movements (labour, environment, gender etc.) into one (Murphy, 2004). Despite successful mobilization and the spread of community organizing, the "Battle for Seattle" did not result in a national working-class movement that would challenge the neoliberal status quo.

The final high-profile mobilization against economic inequality was the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. It, more than any other recent protest movement, typifies the lack of consensus and solidarity among US progressive movements. Although the protest attracted widespread global media attention and solidarity mobilizations in countless world cities, it quickly devolved into

chaos as participants could not agree on a unified message and movement strategy (Schwartz, 2011). Although the activists were correct that there was widespread public outrage at Wall Street and its political allies, they overestimated people's willingness to mobilize against the liberal establishment, which supported Obama's Wall Street bailouts. Instead, it was the conservative white middle class whose simmering rage against Obama was being mobilized by conservative activists into the Tea Party movement.

The Tea Party is a reactionary movement that uses America's most powerful myths of individualism and limited government to oppose all progressive economic policies, specifically progressive taxation and government regulation (Lepore, 2010). The movement, which poses as grassroots, patriotic rebellion, is sponsored by America's conservative plutocrats and powerful right-wing media, especially Fox and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial section. It has become a populist Trojan horse pressuring politicians and government officials to continue the process of destroying the welfare state through deregulation and privatization (Williamson, 2016). The Tea Party paved the way for the election of Donald Trump in 2016 by moving beyond economic issues to identity politics, specifically targeting progressive civil rights gains made since the 1960s, as well as immigration reform (Parker and Barreto, 2013). The demographics of the activists are quite like core Trump supporters: white, male, middle aged, middle class and evangelical Protestant (Ibid.). Paradoxically, by almost any measure, this is the most privileged group in US society, who claim to be reacting to the erosion of their hard-earned privileges. The Tea Party and Trump personify the historical reactionary backlash against the welfare state and identity politics that have made the American system more inclusive.

Militarism

The protests against the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s overlapped substantially with the civil rights movement, which declared the war immoral and protested against its derailment of Johnson's War on Poverty. Overall, the Vietnam anti-war protests were the largest and most diverse political and social protests in US history. Every possible violent and non-violent means were used by the greatest diversity of groups spanning the entire political spectrum, from Maoists to conservative retirees (Wells, 2016). While most of the time these groups did not work together, they nonetheless brought great pressure to bear on the US political establishment, eventually forcing it to negotiate an end to the war.

Vietnam was the first war where the media had full access to the battlefield. The vivid images of suffering and stories of US atrocities during the war added fuel to the outrage against the government. Some returning soldiers joined the anti-war movement and shocked the American public with jarring first-hand accounts that contradicted government propaganda. Dissent within the military itself also became a powerful movement. The draft became immensely unpopular and draft-dodging a form of resistance. Returning soldiers, along with a broad coalition of anti-war protestors, formed the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, which

coordinated a massive protest across the country in late 1969. This was followed by more protests after the escalation of the war into Cambodia and the massacres of students on two university campuses in 1970. The complexity of the protest movement, along with the public reaction, created a period of great instability and conflict in American society that frightened the political and business establishment (Isserman and Kazin, 1999).

The US government countered the growing protest movement by trying to splinter the movement using federal, state and local law agencies, along with dirty tricks, including infiltrating movements with provocateurs (Wells, 2016). President Richard Nixon deployed the term "silent majority" to motivate conservative Americans who were not active in politics to support the war (Jeffreys-Jones, 1999). However, the counter-protests failed, and the war's unpopularity forced Congress to rein in Nixon's ability to continue the war (Woods, 2003). While the anti-war protests were successful in ending the war in Vietnam, they were less successful in democratizing the US political establishment and making it more accountable to Americans, especially the power of the military–industrial complex and foreign policy. After the repeal of the draft in 1973, the US military became an all-volunteer force, which is held in high regard by Americans. That, and the great importance of the military–industrial complex to the US economy, has greatly limited the impact of protests on the continuity of militarized US foreign policy.

During the Cold War, many anti-war activists were seasoned Vietnam war protestors who continued their struggle against US militarization and stockpiling of nuclear weapons (Meyer, 1990). Bolstered by their alliance with the anti-nuclear power environmental movement, activists mobilized the Nuclear Freeze movement in the late 1970s (Wittner, 2009). Despite the movement's great success in generating public opposition to the nuclear arms race, its impact on changing US policy was ineffective due to the fact that the political and corporate media establishment proved to be resistant to public opinion on foreign policy. Consequently, there was little protest after the launching of the War on Terror in response to the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Most anti-war organizers were silenced by militarized nationalism labelling all dissent as treasonous. In Congress, only one representative, Barbara Lee, voted against giving President Bush authorization to wage unilateral "preemptive wars." The anti-war movement awoke briefly when the US government was making its case for the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Although the movement was global in scale and spread to many cities in the United States, it dissipated after the election of Barack Obama and because the Great Recession shifted Americans' attention away from the ensuing wars (Heaney and Rojas, 2015). During the period of nationalistic support for the War on Terror, most Americans ignored or approved the passing of the US Patriot Act, bulking up the security surveillance state. This Act allows US security agencies to illegally collect information and spy on Americans, authorizes the FBI to investigate protestors without their knowledge and empowers federal authorities to prosecute American activists as terrorists (ACLU, n.d.). It also enhanced the reach of militarism deeper into foreign and domestic policies (National Priorities Project, 2020).

Gender

After decades of activism and protests, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) guaranteeing equal protection by sex in the Constitution was passed by Congress in 1972. However, in the next ten years, ERA activists failed to get two-thirds of the states to ratify the amendment. More than any protest movement in the last 50 years, the ERA is the clearest example of the constitutional barriers to progressive social change. The US Constitution and its defenders perpetuate a tyranny of a minority over the will of the majority. Since 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has focused on passing and ratifying the ERA. The movement's immense organizational effort united countless religious, political, civil and labour groups. The ERA was supported by every administration until Reagan removed it from the Republican Party platform in 1980. Its opponents counterattacked using politics of fear, including linking women's equality to homosexuality, abortion, communism, hatred of men, the erosion of legal protection for women and the destruction of the family (Neuwirth, 2015).

During the campaign for the ERA's ratification in state legislatures, future US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1973) argued that women's rights cannot be left to the legislative process because of the historical reluctance to declare women as equal to men and because of the head-spinning variety of laws and regulations that harmed and "protected" women in each state. Her paper contains countless examples of sexist court rulings, judges' opinions and politicians' patriarchy, as well as discriminatory practices and legislation. Ginsburg's closing argument for ratifying the ERA is that it would guarantee individual rights consistent with the Constitution. Ironically, the US legal system, whose power rests on the myth of its constitutional defence of individual rights, does not guarantee those rights to over half of Americans. Today, third-wave feminist activists seeking to once again pass the Amendment face the great barrier of American historical amnesia: 80% of Americans mistakenly believe that women and men already have constitutionally protected equal rights (ERA Coalition, 2016).

Coinciding with the ERA movement, gay rights also became a powerful identity movement in the 1970s. Since the first Pride march in 1970, marches have taken place annually across the United States and the world celebrating the movement's victories and protesting the continued oppression of LGBTQIA2S+ people. This powerful identity movement continues to educate, protest and use legal actions to fight against intolerance, discrimination and persistently high levels of violence against LGBTQIA2S+ people. Unfortunately, there are divisions within the movement as transgender activists (especially minorities) claim their needs are often neglected or ignored by the mainstream gay rights movement dominated by "cis(gender) white men" (Epstein and Friedman, 2019).

Politicians from both US political parties openly oppose full LGBTQIA2S+ rights, mostly using religion to reason away equal protection. In 1996, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The law barred any state from recognizing

same-sex marriages in other states and banned the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage for all programmes, including healthcare insurance, immigration, survivor benefits and others. The Bush administration proposed a constitutional amendment to make marriage exclusively heterosexual. Although Evangelical Christians and their conservative allies made DOMA one of their highest priorities, the US public, swayed by gay rights activists and persuaded by the fact that homosexuality is not a choice, began to grow more tolerant of LGBTQIA2S+ rights. In 2013, the US Supreme Court struck down the DOMA, a major victory for the movement. Despite the victories, the conservative backlash continues. Transgender people are currently facing a coordinated attack from conservative national groups seeking to introduce state laws that would restrict their rights (HRC, 2021).

While feminist and gay rights movements continue fighting discrimination in American society, they are always in peril of becoming too narrow and exclusive to effect systemic change. In the case of the #MeToo movement, the white women who thought they had started something new were unaware that #MeToo had already existed for over a decade in Alabama, where Tarana Burke was building a community organization helping Black girls talk about and confront sexual violence (Wolitzky, 2020). The process of organizing further exposed the lack of understanding between women across class and race. While powerful women in the entertainment industry resolved to stand together to fight against harassment and discrimination, they had no idea that women farmworkers and service workers had been involved in this struggle for decades. While there is optimism in the growing solidarity of third-wave feminism, there is little historical evidence that identity movements in the United States can bridge deep social inequalities.

Environment

Concern about the natural environment in the United States has produced three seldom overlapping protest movements. The Conservation movement, which has the longest history of the three movements I examine, is closely aligned with traditional American values of rugged individualism and frontier romanticism, grounded in white masculine privilege. Environmental protection, which has been in force since the 1970s, is a progressive movement creating laws and regulations to clean up the environment and striking a compromise on a responsible balance between economic development and environmental stewardship. Environmental justice, a term coined in the 1980s, is a community grassroots movement fighting against discrimination in environmental protection on the basis of race and class. These three movements remain mostly distinct because they serve different interests and communities.

The US government is the largest landowner in the country and leases most public lands to mining, ranching and logging corporations as a sort of compromise between resource exploitation and conservation. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, conservation activists launched a protest movement that challenged

this compromise, arguing that exploitation was rampant, destructive and threatened the powerful role of nature as integral to American identity, the public good and moderating force on civilization. The movement successfully pushed the US government to pass stricter protections for public lands. This prompted a countermovement by business groups called the Sagebrush Rebellion, which was supported by Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of Interior James Watt, who labelled conservation activists pagans because they worshipped nature instead of God (Byars, 2020). Today, conservation movements often purchase private land to protect it from exploitation while lobbying the US government to conserve public lands. Meanwhile, business interests and their libertarian allies want the US government to transfer public lands to the states, some of whom would privatize them.

In 1962, Rachel Carson's bestseller *The Silent Spring*, about pesticide pollution, along with dramatic environmental disasters such as the Cuyahoga River fire in Ohio, is often seen as the beginning of the modern environmental movement in the United States, leading to federal laws in the 1970s creating the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and others protecting America's water, air and wildlife. Again, the conservatives counter-attacked, attempting to slash environmental protections. However, because the environmental movement had successfully publicized the benefits of environmental health and protections to the US public, the reactionary attacks were mostly unsuccessful. Nonetheless, they continued during the Clinton administration when economic efficiency was seen as the way to accomplish better environmental outcomes (Hahn and Stavins, 2001). Policies encouraging energy and fuel efficiency, corporate responsibility and self-reporting were criticized by environmental activists as inadequate "green washing." This trend of undermining government environmental regulation in favour of corporate self-management has continued under subsequent administrations. Meanwhile, environmental activism also underwent profound changes from grassroots community activism to technocratic, special interest lobbying (Shellenberger and Nordhaus, 2004). The problem with environmental activism lies not only with its increasingly elitist profile but mostly with a narrow definition of environmental protection that rarely acknowledges and includes social justice issues (Shellenberger and Nordhaus, 2004; Klein, 2014). As Klein (p. 460) puts it, environmental protection requires a different world view in which the public and communal good decided by inclusive communities triumphs over oligarchic private interest.

In the 1980s, the environmental justice movement emerged as a counterpoint to elitist environmentalism, which was mostly white, upper middle class, self-serving, and harmed minority groups by displacing environmentally hazardous processes to their regions and neighbourhoods (Morrison and Dunlap, 1986). Environmental justice activism is community activism that recognizes the connection between race, poverty, a lack of social services, a lack of political power and environmental pollution (Bullard, 1993). The movement was fused with existing civil rights organizations and quickly grew within academia, organized labour, youth groups and other community organizations. Although over the last 30 years of intense local activism the movement's core principles have been recognized by

federal and state environmental agencies, they have not become a priority in environmental regulation. Despite the growing public awareness of environmental justice issues in the United States, uneven environmental quality and protection is stubbornly persistent in racially and economically segregated communities.

Today's Poor People's Campaign

Fifty years after MLK's Poor People's Campaign, the movement has been resurrected by religious leaders and a growing group of allies to continue the "revolution of values." In the words of the Reverend Barber, one of its leaders, the campaign is a "moral fusion coalition" of the poor and their allies aimed at eliminating the five interlocking injustices built into the US system, namely poverty, racism, militarism, ecological devastation and national moral corruption (Tight Rope, 2021). The PPC connects its movement with historical struggles against oppression, including the class politics of the nineteenth century, which built coalitions between progressive organizations fighting for systemic change. The contrast between fusion and identity politics is stark: fusion politics aims to transform the system so that it is responsive to all interests of the movement; whereas identity politics is transactional seeking only to expand the system to include specific groups. The PPC is the only fusion movement in the United States today, with its activists making their case for eliminating poverty and the corrosive impacts of inequality on the economy and democracy.

Over 50 years ago, the Black power activist Stokley Carmichael (1967) coined the term "institutional racism" as a way to distinguish between overt racism in the daily interactions between people and covert racism, which was integral in the functioning of social and political institutions. Today, the PPC is the only protest movement struggling for systemic change in the United States by challenging the idea that a system built on racial and economic inequality can be reformed. To most Americans, the idea that their system is built on a history of racial and political oppression is shocking given their belief in powerful myths that idealize the United States as a "force for good." Predictably, many Americans condemn the PPC's reforms as anti-American. Even the so-called liberals, sympathetic to charges of racism and economic inequality, believe the US economic and political system just needs some tweaks or reforms. The PPC today, much like MLK's PPC in 1968, questions whether US capitalism can be reformed since it was built on racism and inequality despite being sold to Americans and the world as a virtuously exceptional system of equal opportunity and justice.

Conclusion

The past 50 years of protests in the United States have yielded little social and political progress for two main reasons. Almost all the protest movements have been identity movements whose protagonists were seeking to be included in the system, not to change it to eliminate structural inequality. Thus, although the

outcome of their transactional politics may have resulted in curbing overt discrimination and laws protecting their interests, it has had little impact on structural inequality, enforcement of progressive laws and waves of new discriminatory laws. Leaving the system intact makes any movement vulnerable to conservative reactionary backlash and the reproduction of institutional structures of racism and inequality. Thus, the United States continues to be a conservative society where religion and tradition play a significant role, and individual effort is understood as key to success and failure – not arbitrary fortune and systemic failures (PEW, 2011; WVS, 2021). Individual freedom is prized over freedom from want. Racism, inequality, the cult of individualism, white religious nationalism and violent state repression of dissent play significant roles in the lack of social and institutional trust (Curtis, 2002; Michener, 2018).

There are at least three processes that are barriers to transformational social change in the United States and have turned a political system meant to guard against the tyranny of the majority into one of a tyranny of the minority. A tyranny of meritocracy reproduces the idea that the poor are to blame for their failures, and the rich have earned their success (Sandel, 2020). There is no room in this idealized social theory for systemic change as the system works perfectly in rewarding those who work hard and punishing those who do not. Sandel concludes that although such a system alienates many Americans, they do not believe in systemic change since many hold the same view of the American way of life. Instead, they redouble their efforts to succeed by playing by the rules. This consensus strengthens only the powerful who become entrenched gatekeepers, who slowly incorporate leaders of identity movements into their ranks while dividing grassroots activists.

The emergence of social entrepreneurship is evidence of the co-optation of identity politics and civil society in general. Although there is empirical evidence that Americans are withdrawing from public life and civic participation (e.g., Putnam, 2001), these community grassroots movements are being replaced by fake grassroots ("Astroturf") corporate, technocratic and bureaucratic NGOs that lobby on behalf of various interests (Ismail and Kamat, 2018). One often-cited example of this process is the decline of labour union membership by 65% over the past 50 years. Workers who leveraged their collective strength into middle-class status are now independent contractors whose interests are represented by a loose affiliation of progressive think tanks, pundits and NGOs. Another side effect of social entrepreneurship is what W.E.B. DuBois called "the American delusion" of quantifying social progress by how many marginalized people become incorporated into the ruling classes while ignoring those left behind (Laurent, 2018).

The tyranny of merit and social entrepreneurship contribute to the process of state capture. The 1971 Powell memo, a rallying call for businesses to get involved in politics, marks the transformation of organized corporate interests into a political movement to vanquish the social welfare state and institute a neoliberal one in its place. Reaganomics (trickle down economic ideology), the Moral Majority (white Christian nationalism) and the Contract with America (reactionary social

politics) were powerful conservative movements that entrenched the American neoliberal system. Over time, the neoliberal elite consensus has further strengthened the tyranny of the minority and oligarchy, which, although leaving small openings for identity politics, shuts the doors to transformational movements such as the Poor People's Campaign started by MLK and revived 50 years later by activists fighting for genuine progress.

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Chapter 13

Model of inclusive civil socio-ecological culture as a novel form of protest

The case of the Water Pedagogical Forest

José G. Vargas-Hernández

Introduction

In times of sociopolitical conflict, a protest is an extra-institutional form of political behaviour. Protest actions and other forms of engagement directly relate to policymaking, political decisions, legislation, political parties' performance and politics in general. Variations of the forms of protest, such as rallies, demonstrations, marches, petitions, strikes and so on, point to a broad variety of protest actions and their individual and collective applications (Fisher et al., 2019, p. 5).

Mild forms of protest and movement campaigns lead to hybrid forms of authority linked to shifting forms of governance, which involve persistent attempts to reinforce state power. Although democratic governance has shifted towards a soft use of power, management and civic self-responsibilities, protest campaigns continue to persist being a strategy of voicing aspects related to citizens' well-being, sustainable development or preventing intensified commodification and degradation of the natural environment, among other things.

Social movements, civil organizations, collectives and communities with emerging charismatic leadership stimulate and promote diverse popular protest responses against abuses of power, leading to the repudiation of corrupt claims of the authorities working in coalition with real estate developers and private investors while other protesters follow the prevailing discourse aimed at subsequently softening and redirecting public resentment.

The chapter focuses on a soft approach identified in new forms of protest analysed in the case of the Water Pedagogical Forest (WPF) and the attempts of private investors to take over the public area for commercial purposes.

It is essential to clarify that this case based on the WPF is remarkably different from other cases, such as the Agroecological Park of Zapopan (APZ), in terms of physical spaces and locations, aims, the genesis of development, collectives, social movements, organizations involved in diverse strategies, campaigns and processes. Moreover, the results and outcomes of collective actions were completely different.

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In the first instance, social movements and protest are conceptualized, then some theoretical approaches, followed by the forms of protest, are analysed and, finally, the outcomes are discussed. After this framework of reference is outlined, the analysis turns to the case of the WPF, which is divided into the following sections: geographical, spatial and temporal dimensions; the actors involved in the conflict, protest, movement campaigns and, finally, the outcomes.

Conceptualizing social movements and protest

Social movements and protests result from a discontent with existing economic, political, ideological and other conditions, relying on societies as a human product that can be transformed (Buechler, 2011).

Social movements are organized collectivities continuously acting in collective action outside of the institutional and organizational channels to challenge and defend an extant authority, society, culture, community, organization institutionally or culturally based in the world order or a group of which they are a part (Snow et al., 2019, p. 10). The essential elements of the concept of social movements are to be a form of collective action to challenge or defend the existing authority by way of organized activity with temporal continuity. However, the continually evolving definition of protest when drawing differences in historical comparisons has implications for accuracy and consistency.

Social movement and protest are distinct concepts, although they can be used interchangeably when referring to extra-institutional and common political action. Social movements are defined as collective challenges with common purposes, social solidarities and sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities (Tarrow, 2011, p. 9; Bishara, 2021). A new type of social movement is a transnational one and on the move (Rizzo Lara, 2021).

The adoption of online media and social networking as resources of protest and use by social movements is an important trend (Borbáth and Gessler, 2020; Bremer et al., 2020; Milkman, 2017; Tufekci, 2017). The conceptualization of new social movements emphasizes using social networks in a virtual sense with the support of added information and communication technologies (Shirky, 2011). Political protest in the media is facilitated using the framing and sharing of information and concepts within the space and time span of the political protest. The concept of framing allows people to perceive and make sense of information aligned with their beliefs and values (Rainsford and Wambach, 2021).

Framing is used to articulate concepts and define specific concerns of the protest, which explain the scope and limitations of the movements/protests. Framing includes the categories of topics defined as episodic and covering background information, as well as focusing on an event or an individual created for coding purposes.

Interventions of actors' opportunities in social movements to engage in politics may occur as part of the politics of scaling among, across and within scales

(Bebbington and Bury, 2013; Perreault, 2014; Sayre, 2015), evolving into relationally dispersed hierarchies, horizontal networks and other interactive webs with the fluidity of articulations and avoid differentiated power relationships (Jessop et al., 2008). The scalar politics theory supports networked scales and scaled networks in governance analysis separating the entities in nested spheres from the political construction (Swyngedouw, 2004).

Social movement research stresses the centrality of space and time in the study of the contentious politics of protest dynamics (Schwedler, 2016), waves of containment and the concept of protest cycles (Tarrow, 2011). A contrasting perspective focuses on the long-term process of a unique and singular event (Moore, 2011). Widespread discontent and the desire to challenge the power of authorities can persist before any resistance and protest activity. This can erupt in space settings as the result of protest activism of collective opinion that is not disaffected but demands change.

A critical concept for contentious politics is the upscaling of a protest. The contentious political approach to the protest process acknowledges that engagement of progressive or reactionary mobilization and political activism is supported by concepts and tools while government authority weakens.

The mobilization of protest availability is based on a model of supply and demand and determined by the efforts of people to protest, ideological and psychological dispositions, access to mobilization networks and organizations and the available biographical structure in place and time (Rainsford and Saunders, 2021). The ideological position of social movements to attract people is defined as the ideological aspect of supply. The analytical framework developed by Rainsford and Saunders (2021) merges the theory of supply and demand for protest with structural and agentic factors to predict protest participation.

The concept of biographical availability structure refers to the absence of individual constraints on one's willingness to protest participation leading to outcomes (Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006). The concept of mobilization availability captures the differences between old and new political protests and the characteristics of individual protesters.

Theoretical approaches

A theoretical framework that analyses the relationship between political behaviour and protest outcomes is relevant to more democratic contexts. The theory of the supply and demand of protest argues that substantial social change is based on the supply of protest. According to this theory, the supply of protest participation is referred to the opportunities to protest provided by organizers, grassroots activists and social movement organizations. In the building of an analytical framework, Rainsford and Saunders (2021) contextualize the theoretical insights in relation to Global Climate Strikes (GCSs) by notions of supply and demand of protest with the dominant forms of protest.

The cleavage theory is defined as a division of society confronted by two dichotomous positions on two sides determined by the social structure, which shows the differences and a deep division that configure alignments with political parties (Castromil, 2020). The social identity theory argues that protestors' groups can be identified by an alternative group of available categorizations by deploying persuasive tactical repertoires (Wouters, 2019; Mazumder, 2018). The collective identity of a protest movement refers to the building and developing of deeper bonds of a trust relationship and feelings of solidarity among protest participants.

The sociology of mobilizations studies the forms of protest, patterns and regularities based on the collective action and the sociohistory of protests with a limited argumentation used by actors in different contests by holding a specific contentions repertoire (Rennes, 2011). The theoretical framework on contentious politics developed by Tilly (2010) supports the connection between social movements and the democratization of nation-states.

The core tenets of social movement theory became the sociological approach to social movements and protests concerning mobilization processes more than the concerns of the political context and outcomes (Walder, 2009). The paradigm of social movement theory has been referenced in mobilization processes and movement outcomes. Social movement and geography theory have studied place and space, arguing that space structures networks and relationships. An anarchist theory of change and propaganda of the deed is currently being advanced by environmental activists as a differentiated form of protest that makes a proper account of the diversity of aims which may have positive or negative impacts on political agendas and public opinion.

Collective action and social movements theories intend to explain the determinants of mobilization, stressing the opportunities to mobilize structures, framing and resources (Opp, 2009; Staggenborg, 2016; Tilly and Tarrow, 2015). The framing theory explains the perception of information through interactions between people and their surrounding environment. Social movement theory possesses the tenets of political opportunity and resource mobilization (Meyer and Lupo, 2010; Vassallo, 2018).

The resource mobilization theory of social movement activism involving more emotional and identity concepts is supported by the collective action theory despite the limitations in economic utility assumptions of the rational choice model. The collective action theory is based on economic micro-foundations of cost–benefit models and connects political behaviour to social science theory to provide an interactive account of protest movements.

Theorizing the dynamics involved in the different forms of protest needs to be broadened and deepened. The effects of different modalities of protest events on movement dynamics and outcomes have been theorized to determine their interaction dynamics between spatial and temporal dimensions (Bishara, 2021). The spatial and temporal dimensions of different forms of protest generative power theories impact contentious politics, along with movement broadening, expansion

and deepening. The broken window theory refers to graffiti's disruptiveness and breeding of more graffiti, reinforcing the potential of graffiti's resistance. The political opportunity structure theory takes the form of protest focusing on cultural and expressive dimensions as the substance of action for post-citizenship, such as in the case of protest graffiti.

Some methods have been outlined by Chun et al. (2019) using grounded theory approach based on sampling and thematic exploration to be codified and categorized (Charmaz, 2006). The theoretical use of an explanatory design method is based on deploying a survey and delving deeper into specific topics using focus groups (Ivankova et al., 2006). Moreover, systematic field observations of the events of protest campaigns and other forms of collective action are a component of the research building.

Building event databases to document the protests, providing standardized coding of their occurrence, characteristics and other features is a theoretical and methodological innovation used to conduct research on contentious politics. Research relies on media reports to develop protocols and document theoretically critical features of protest events. All these methods can be coupled with a comparative analysis to answer broader theoretical questions and the effects on political outcomes.

Forms of protest and outcomes

A social movement can engage in various forms of protest actions, subject to the potential goals, the perceived advances of success, resources of members and the political constraints they face. One's political experience and interests are influential in the decision to take part in various forms of initiative-taking or reactive demonstrations and protest actions. Social movements have different forms of organizations, ranging between those deemed tight and loose.

Forms of protest actions require an organizational capacity supported by an existing or created organizational structure and the development and expansion of an organizational infrastructure. Single, multiple-site and extended forms of protest actions require coordination and deep ties among their participants (Fu, 2017) established through collective experiences. Regarding the spatial dimensions of the forms of protest actions, this can place in a single site involving the occupation of one space and enabling physical outreach to accommodate broader meetings over a period or extending it over multiple sites at multiple periods of time.

The various forms of contention can be transferred by a social movement from one site to others. Authoritarian and totalitarian states always generate various forms of protest and resistance actions, including among internal exiles, depending on the intensity of repression. Repressed individualized and passive forms of protest tend to provide the possibilities of the eventual emergence of more assertive, experienced and coordinated forms of public claim-making and more potent forms of protest.

The different forms of protest constitute a movement's repertoire. The repertoires of protest are the non-conventional forms of action interrupting the routines to attract the attention of the public and influencing power elites (Tilly, 2010; Della Porta, 2020). Typical forms of protest actions are violent acts, boycotts, strikes, obstructions and so on. Street demonstrations and protest actions are some of the visible forms of opposition to government policies.

A potent form of protest pattern is one that appeals for the restoration of entitlements. Other protest actions may be progressively planned while the most irrational forms of protest will be resisted. Protest graffiti is a visual artefact of a depersonalized approach to indirect forms of personalization and challenging messages to give them political meaning, significance and identity. Another sociological perspective used to study collective mobilization in the interplay between political and cultural, symbolic and instrumental factors is the infrapolitical forms of protest and mobilization, such as the use of biographies in social movement sociology.

Research on protest actions and social movements explores the power of contentious practices and experiences in shaping internal and external movement outcomes. However, research has focused more on external outcomes related to the effectiveness of tactical repertoires of protest actions in achieving social movement goals (Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004, p. 284). Protest experiences and actions can affect the internal social movement outcomes, such as by generating organizational infrastructures (Frenzel et al., 2014), building collective identities, creating networks and enhancing commitment to some common causes. The different forms of protest events themselves shape the internal movement dynamics.

Studies on protest outcomes include changes in public opinion, policy, voting, the behaviour of political elites and political transition to democratic contexts (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Haggard and Kaufman, 2016; Kadivar, 2018). Public opinion is a mediating factor determining outcomes. Protest actions have political outcomes mediated by public opinion and media attention.

An analysis of the effects and outcomes of modalities and forms of protest actions should minimize complexity to isolate the resulting movement outcomes. The outcome mobilizes people against the ruling institutions, governments and parties while being repressed. Although the forms of protest actions and governance shift over time, they require statecraft to consolidate authority and control environments to prevent social mobilization.

There is a trend of convergence between sociology and political science on protest and movement outcomes. Protest outcomes were not deemed relevant for explaining and analysing protest actions in earlier political science studies. Since then, protest actions have witnessed a resurgence of interest in political science, along with sociology, and focus on the outcomes of protest. Sociology tends to prioritize the explanation and analysis of protest actions and mobilization processes over political outcomes. Political sociology channels social forces into political outcomes of protest, and collective actions, such as attitudinal and electoral outcomes.

The political sociology of protest action may combine mass opinion, legislative behaviour and the relationships between social movements and the media in such a way that protest mobilization combines frames and tactics, media, legislative speech and electoral outcomes (Wasow, 2020). On the other hand, sociology is reluctant to talk about public opinion of protest and movement outcomes by diffusing the consequences beyond the terms of success or failure. Diverse protest action aims require recognition of diverse protest outcomes, one of which, the desire for publicity is constant correlating with media attention and other political outcomes (Seguin, 2016). Outcomes are contingent upon the processes of protest and movement actions, as well as reactions characterized by contentious claims-making (Giugni, 2007). In terms of a cost–benefit analysis of a collective protest, actors are the result of the behavioural actions framed by institutional and cultural restrictions, which draw on the influence of discursive and attitudinal sources leading them to influence their bad outcomes. In the analysis of protest actions and political outcomes, the inflicted costs are relevant at the time of raising awareness and becoming sensitive to the aims of protestors. Cost considerations should be incorporated into an institutional and political sociology analysis of protest outcomes.

Focusing on collective action and mobilization may run counter to any account of outcomes. From a longer-term perspective, the outcomes triggered by nonviolent and mass protests across the Arab world are regressive. The mobilization processes must be analysed over the political correlates of a movement's emergence and effects. The resulting outcomes of protests tend to lead towards positive legislative changes, considering that rational political leaders take advantage of the claims and concerns of protestors with the preferences of citizens as majoritarian incentives to respond.

Protest actions tend to exert a direct effect on political outcomes through the common mechanism of sourcing information to legislators based on the informative cue concerning the issues, claims and concerns of citizens in a limited information environment (Andrews and Seguin, 2015; Gillion, 2013). Considering that each protest action has different and specific types of resulting outcomes, this confirms that the political sociology of protest outcomes is based on the characteristics of social movements and organizational collectives, legislative speeches and the outcomes of political campaigns.

Democratic transition processes can be precipitated and accompanied by protests. The types of outcomes related to protest actions are relevant to more democratic contexts. Eventually, protests actions of social movements become progressive and have positive results, such as the case of the Fourth Transformation of Mexico, which has raised the hopes of large population segments that have resented corruption as the outcome of institutional capture.

The form of protest action differentially affects outcomes. Short and multiple-site actions can expand the base of a movement and extend and broaden it, while single-site protest actions may deepen movements building organizational capabilities and fostering collective identities. These constitute a relevant research area to understand incentives and the formation process of contemporary civil and political contestation.

Contextual, geographical and temporal dimensions of WPF

The WPF, also known as Colomos III, is located north-east of the Guadalajara metropolitan area in the municipality of Zapopan, Mexico. The WPF is a citizen-run project that started in 1998 and was given continuity by the inhabitants' community. They assumed the challenge of reforesting the property seeking to convert it from an unused lot to an environmental forest, which counts with infiltration of rainwater that falls into the land and feeds springs within the city and recover it as a public space that had been continuously under threat (CCPROBPA, 2017). The intervention of the WPF was considered one of the emblematic projects of Zapopan's current government that was to have paths for a landscaped, agrological park and an area of urban agricultural allotments.

The goal/vision and the idea of this project started with the state acquiring this public space in 1898, which was subsequently leased to the municipality of Zapopan in 1993. By the end of the 19th century, the area was renowned for its high hydrological value until 1897, when Governor Luis C. Curiel purchased 248 hectares of it to protect and conserve riverbeds and springs, such as "Colomos," "La Campana," "Chochocate," "Barrenos" and "La Culebra."

The WPF is owned by the government of the State of Jalisco, part of which was delivered on loan to the Zapopan City Council in 1993. Subsequently, in 2022, it was awarded the protected status of Municipal Hydrological Protection "Area La Campana – Colomos III." This area is part of the hydrological system that integrates the Forest of "La Primavera," the "Bajío del Arenal" and the "Atemajac-Colomos" sub-basin (CCPROBPA, 2017). A water supply network was then implemented to distribute the water to the city. Since 2009, there has been a political intention to consolidate the urban forest according to environmental protection criteria.

As a municipal project, the WPF aimed to seek the recovery of the public land known as "Arroyo La Campana" to serve the community through restoration of the natural environment, consolidation of the infrastructure serving visitors, promotion of environmental socio-ecological culture, sustainable management of its water resources and the conservation of the ecosystem. The sector in which this project was developed is Colomos III, which is a Municipal Area of Hydrological Protection. It has a high hydrological value, being a consolidated source of water supply comprising a spring and several streams. This area, located in the centre of the WPF, comprises 36.4 hectares and is a perfect space for practising and promoting environmental socio-ecological culture based on protection, restoration, conservation, responsible preservation and rational use of the environment. These ideas have been approved by the Congress of Jalisco as identifying the municipal area of Zapopan as a protected area.

In 28 hectares of woodland, restoration work was conducted to make the forest a meeting place for citizens, as well as a venue for socio-ecological cultural events and other environmental services (Prieto, 2013). The park has become an important part of the ecosystem, being a living laboratory and a formidable scenario for meaningful environmental learning.

The pedagogical sense is based on a fundamental principle, which should regulate the cognitive and the awareness work of learners and the general population, namely educating with water and for it. This is a strategic environmental project that benefits the sustainable management of water resources, provides improvements to the use of water supply and its quality, promotes the conservation of the ecosystem and its biodiversity, proposes comprehensive solutions for flood management and, finally, promotes awareness of environmental socio-ecological culture. The surface of hydrological conservation benefits 64,000 inhabitants directly and more than 20 suburbs belonging to Zapopan.

The actors in conflict

The municipal authority of Zapopan prevented any improvement work for the WPF because some individuals tried to claim ownership of that property. In the Territorial Strategy for Urban Prosperity Zapopan 2030, which is an interdisciplinary planning exercise, Zapopan has been identified as a municipality of both great environmental value and serious environmental threat. To mitigate the latter and foster prosperous development, three strategies have been proposed:

(1) the sustainable management of natural capital and its ecosystems,
(2) establishing a system of connectivity and integration of territorial networks that allow for the monitoring of the flow of rivers and waters safe for human consumption and building systems of water supply for the inhabitants of the growing metropolitan area,
(3) implementing the "Compact City" model with a re-concentrated population.

The forest – part of an estate in the "Arroyo La Campana Colomos III" – was declared a protected natural area by the local Congress in July 2014 to conserve this hydrological zone threatened by real estate developments and private investors. This was passed by the Technical Committee of Colomos III, headed by a councillor, composed of councillors, municipal offices (Ecology and Parks and Gardens) and representatives of civil society, among them the academic Jaime Eloy Barajas from the University of Guadalajara (Rello, 2015).

An alliance of various organizations, groups and citizens committed to the protection of the forest has worked together for 20 years, demanding the authorities stop illegal actions undertaken by some private companies and entities. The area, proclaimed public patrimony by the state authorities at the turn of the 20th century, proved to be a crucial strategic source for supplying water to the city.

The Pro-Water Pedagogical Forest Collective (*Colectivo Ciudadano Pro Bosque Pedagógico del Agua* or CCPROBPA) is an independent civil organization of local governments and political parties that, among its objectives, seeks to promote the protection, preservation, restoration and conservation of the WPF and the hydrological system to which it belongs, as well as to promote social integration and citizens' participation to foster civil society (CCPROBPA, 2017).

Individuals who have participated in the reforestation of the soils of this area have been involved in a whole spectrum of works, including weed removal, cleaning, the improvement and conservation of soil, the planting of ahuehuetes (Montezuma cypress), magnolias, sapote and willows, among other things.

The Collective Pro-Water Pedagogical Forest and the Government of Zapopan subsequently agreed on the protection of the forest and announced a proposal to create a Citizens' Council, a link between civil society and the authorities. This collective, non-governmental organization was composed of people committed to the improvement of the environment and the well-being of the inhabitants. A multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary group of experts, activists and ordinary people was formed to protect the biophysical and ecological variety of the ecosystem. In this way, the cooperation of organized citizens and the municipal authorities could become a practice serving two purposes, namely protection of the environment and fostering mutual trust.

The Decentralized Public Body had the responsibility to administrate and guarantee the proper use of the forest with the contributions of the City Council, amounting to two million pesos (approx. $97,000,000) and with donations from citizens who were concerned about the protection of this space. The board of governors heading the Decentralized Public Body was composed exclusively of citizens and individuals selected through a public call to evaluate the proposals for forest management and provide advice as regards transparent and sustainable use of the forest's natural resources. Moreover, it provided one with the formative and organizational experience based on pedagogy for integrality, sustainability, communal development harmonious with nature, as well as participative restoration of the forest through the construction of a socio-environmental fabric (Gutiérrez Rosete Hernández, 2019).

Protest and movement actions

The WPF project integrated the citizens' demand that had begun in the 1980s with protest actions for patrimonial rescue and environmental restoration. The space owned by the state government since 1898, which was granted as a loan to the municipality of Zapopan in 1993, was in a state of deterioration and with systematic invasions that had violated public property and its environmental value.

Since the second half of the last century, the area where the WPF is located – originally part of an area of more than 200 hectares – was an object of speculation and corruption that facilitated dispossession for the benefit of real estate developers and private interests. These practices have turned the *Bosque del Agua* property into a no-man's land subject to illegal occupation, predatory deforestation practices, sand extraction, as well as the dumping of building debris and garbage.

Being an attractive location and space, the lands of the WPF are threatened and continuously affected by recurrent fires caused by strong real estate and private investor interests that see it as a place to be plundered for the development of

subdivision projects and residential towers, as well as for large commercial and business complexes with a high value of speculation.

Invasions for dispossession, gentrification and the loss of public space, green areas, forests, water and so on have been encouraged for several decades on the grounds of the WPF. These predatory actions have led to the change of land use of substantial portions of the property from being a public space with forestry potential, conservation and water supply, into exclusive residential subdivisions, shopping centres and apartment towers. This situation ended with converting the land use of green areas and infrastructure of public spaces into exclusive urban areas for housing, business, services and private entertainment (Gutiérrez Rosete Hernández, 2019). Therefore, the entire property of the WPF has been involved in litigation processes promoted by actors who wanted to appropriate it through corrupt practices.

Harmful practices and dispossession of public property motivated by private investors and real estate developers with predatory speculative economic interests with colluding politicians have led to residents' defence and resistance movements. It has also given rise to organized groups and collectives trying to defend, protect and conserve the public spaces of the WPF, constituting high vital socio-environmental value for the inhabitants of Zapopan.

Social pressure sustained notions of various social organizations to proclaim the area where the forest was located as a Municipal Hydrological Protection Area in 2014 and as a State Hydrological Protection Area in 2018 (Gutiérrez Rosete Hernández, 2019).

The CCPROBPA is a civil organization, non-profit, autonomous and independent popular movement from the state, political parties, electoral political organizations, business organizations, religious institutions and businesses based on real estate development and private investments. Although the collective emerged in 2013, it had antecedents dating back to 1998, when citizens, civil organizations, ecologists, academics and defenders of the environment began to have issues, concerns and claims about the recovery of the property as a public space. Its objectives were the protection, preservation, restoration and conservation of the WPF and the hydrological system to which it belonged while promoting processes of participatory, comprehensive, collective, intersectoral, collaborative and solidarity organization contributing to the development of civil society.

The CCPROBPA, in collaboration with various educational institutions, civil organizations, private organizations of corporate volunteers and neighbourhood groups, has played a relevant role in building resistance against the destructive plans of developers and in educating citizens about the importance of civic engagement in the protection of tangible and intangible goods embedded in the environment. As a citizen-run project, it has offered a space for training and field practices for reforestation, care and forest maintenance. In addition to promoting voluntary participation, it has sought to create an explicit link between the forest and the water, in both a pedagogical and participatory sense (Ruiz, 2019). Students, professionals, retirees and other volunteers would meet on Saturday

mornings to conduct different conservation activities in the forest, such as irrigation, planting or land improvement. The municipal government of Zapopan also called on citizens to engage in the WPF protection project to strengthen local cooperation and networking (Gobierno de Zapopan, 2016).

Protest outcomes

The outcomes of the defence movement, including actions of resistance, recovery, restoration, maintenance, conservation and care of the public space of the WPF, brought positive results even though the conflicts derived from the dispute over property ownership continued to persist. The protest was, however, designed to be a long-term, peaceful campaign using institutional, legal and political mechanisms, as well as social involvement and pedagogy practices for integrity.

From being vacant, no man's land, subject to the deposit of garbage and building rubble, and the extraction of sand and materials for construction, the WPF became a space for environmental training and education, as well as organized social participation and an example of recovery and appropriation of the common good of nature. The CCPROBPA collective promoted the process using fundamental principles of integral sustainability, collective organization, participation, autonomy and intersectionality, which implied the confluence of various civil, public and private actors.

The participation of professionals, academics and students of diverse specializations was important in their voluntary involvement with neighbours and citizens of social and civil organizations working together to restore and conserve the place under the agreed management plan. Other activities conducted by the cooperative included the dissemination and promotion of knowledge, technical training and providing legal and operational advice, along with solidarity support for other groups and organizations facing similar problems and challenges.

The case of the CCPROBPA implied the taking of an innovative formative and organizational approach, one that was well-thought-out that arose from the vocational nature and the union of the voluntary engagement of individuals, groups and organizations sharing the same objectives, namely (1) restoring the Water Pedagogical Forest and (2) to build a socio-environmental fabric protecting the project and the communities from the continuous attempts of dispossession and sabotage of third parties seeking opportunities for the commercialization of the WPF.

The example of the WPF protest, as an example of a contestation action, indicates a shifting trend towards activities involving soft power, non-violent, long-term planning, one which is multifaceted and regulated through an institutional and legal framework. The strategy can be effective in conflict management and solving by activating civic potential through education, participation, as well as individual and collective engagement. The WPF has learning implications to think, feel and live in collective processes of horizontal organization, teamwork and assemblies with decision-making by consensus, solidarity, collaboration and cordiality in carrying out everyday tasks such as, in this specific case, the defence,

resistance, restoration, protection, maintenance and conservation of environmental natural resources, which as a common good, must be accessible and benefit the entire population. This set of soft actions of the movement and the protest implied mutual encounters, interconnections and appropriations of the fabric of the socio-ecosystem based on territory, environment, space and time are interwoven with the social and community fabric.

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Chapter 14

Chinese media coverage of Hong Kong's anti-government protests in the context of Chinese nationalism*

Joanna Wardęga

Introduction

The unification of China, that is, the inclusion of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan into the People's Republic of China, has long been the goal of the Chinese communists. This goal became real after the inauguration of Deng Xiaoping's programme of reforms. As he put it:

> The thoughts of our compatriots in Taiwan, Xianggang (Hong Kong) and Aomen (Macau) and of Chinese nationals overseas turn with longing to the motherland, and their sense of patriotism has grown constantly stronger. They are playing an increasingly important and positive part in the effort to achieve the great goal of reunifying our motherland, in supporting the country's modernization and in strengthening the international struggle against hegemonism.
>
> (Deng, 1995, pp. 140–141)

The island of Hong Kong was ceded to the British under the Nanking Treaty of 1842, signed after the First Opium War. In 1860, after the Second Opium War, the part of the Kowloon Peninsula south of Boundary Street was incorporated into British territory. In 1898, the British extended the colony with the remaining parts of Kowloon and the New Territories as far as the Shenzhen River, Lantau Island and other smaller islands – for a limited period of 99 years. Hong Kong's most significant development came under the colonial rule of the United Kingdom. In 1980, the Chinese expressed their intention not to extend the lease of Hong Kong, which referred to the entire area of the British colony. Negotiations resulted in an agreement signed in 1984, stating that the United Kingdom would restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China, which would come into effect on 1 July 1997 (United Nations, 1994). Chinese nationalists recall when Margaret Thatcher lost her balance on the stairs of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and fell to her knees after one of the negotiation rounds with Deng Xiaoping. This fall was perceived as a symbolic apology for the British policy towards China (Gries, 2004, p. 51).

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Although under the nineteenth-century treaties the British were not forced to hand over the whole of Hong Kong to the Chinese, the division of the colony was out of the question. The Chinese arguments were strong, including moral – Hong Kong was captured by the United Kingdom as a result of an invasion resulting from the unethical opium trade – as well as economic or military arguments. In addition, over 90 per cent of Hong Kong's population were Cantonese-speaking Han Chinese (in 2016: 92%). Due to natural constraints, Hong Kong depended on Chinese water supplies and food imports (Chu, 1997), and the city's military security was in question.

Although the British could not stop China's takeover of Hong Kong, the city was granted the status of Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. According to Deng Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" principle, it was decided that Hong Kong would retain its own administrative and economic systems for 50 years. Nevertheless, despite Chinese guarantees, before 1 July 1997, concern over the imminent handover caused a significant outflow of people and capital. Many Hongkongers applied for citizenship in the United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, Australia, the United States and even Honduras. Some of these countries, including the United Kingdom, imposed strict ethnic and financial restrictions in order not to accept all applicants. Although no revolutionary changes took place in Hong Kong right after the handover, the Chinese marked their sovereignty primarily in a symbolic way. The British Hong Kong flag was replaced with the regional flag of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, featuring a white endemic flower, *Bauhinia blakeana*, the Hong Kong orchid tree. Its five petals have small five-pointed stars, replicated from the national PRC flag, as is the red colour of the background. According to the protocol, the national PRC flag should always be flown in a more prominent position than the regional Hong Kong flag (GovHK, 1997). The circle-shaped emblem of Hong Kong also features a white *Bauhinia blakeana* on a red background. The outer ring displays "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" in Chinese and "Hong Kong" in English. The image of the British Queen disappeared from postage stamps and banknotes after the handover, although street names and British monuments remained. Although Christian holidays were retained as non-working days, the Queen's birthday official celebrations were abolished. Two new holidays were introduced: the PRC national holiday on 1 October and the anniversary of the establishment of the Special Administrative Region on 1 July.

Since 1997, the relations of the PRC with Hong Kong have been steadily strengthening due to investment, the intensification of trade, cultural exchange and, indirectly, through growing political influence. Nevertheless, for some time, Beijing avoided too-open attempts to restrict freedoms in Hong Kong, as this could discourage Taiwan from adopting a similar unification solution in the future. The exception was an attempt to introduce Article 23 into the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC. In September 2002, at the request of the State Council of the PRC, the authorities of the Hong Kong SAR proposed to implement Article 23, which would prohibit acts

of treason, secession, sedition and subversion against the Central People's Government (GovHK, 2002). The proposal provoked mass demonstrations against the restriction of freedom of speech. The largest demonstration, which included demands of an economic nature and related to the government's policy towards the SARS epidemic, took place on 1 July 2003, the anniversary of the Chinese takeover. According to various sources, the total number of participants ranged from 350,000 to 700,000 people, which would constitute 5–10 per cent of the Hong Kong population. Ultimately, the article was not included in the constitution then, and the officials responsible for the initiative resigned.

There was a clear response to the protests against the proposed extradition law that broke out in the city in 2019. The Law of the PRC on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong SAR was enacted on 30 June 2020 for

> safeguarding national security; preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment for the offences of secession, subversion, organization and perpetration of terrorist activities, and collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security in relation to the Hong Kong SAR.
> (GovHK, 2020)

Although the 2020 Hong Kong National Security Law, along with the COVID-19 outbreak, brought the protests to a halt, many street demonstrations had already happened in the preceding years. In Hong Kong, the protests were relatively regular, including anti-Chinese marches and assemblies on the anniversaries of the Tiananmen events and China's takeover of Hong Kong. Protests were held against plans to incorporate a new moral and national education curriculum in 2012, organised mostly by students and parents. Another wave of protests, called the "Umbrella Movement," broke out in September 2014, demanding more transparent elections. This movement sparked political activism among young people, as 85% of protesters were under 40 (Zheng and Yuan, 2014).

This chapter focuses on protests following the Hong Kong government's announcement of the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill in February 2019. The social reaction to the proposed extradition law, which would allow criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial, led to Hong Kong's biggest political crisis. The author of this chapter was in Hong Kong in September 2019; indeed, the discrepancies she observed between the protests in the streets and their image in the Chinese media inspired her to undertake this analysis.

Initially, sit-in protests took place in March, evolving into large-scale protests in June. The demonstrators' main slogan was "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times." The protesters came forward with five demands, namely complete withdrawal of the extradition bill from the legislative process; retraction of the term "riot" used to describe the protests; dropping all charges against arrested protesters; the establishment of an independent investigation into police conduct and the use of force; the resignation of Carrie Lam and the implementation of

universal suffrage for the election of the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council (Martin, 2019). After multiple protests, Chief Executive Carry Lam suspended the proposed bill on 15 June. She announced the formal withdrawal of the bill on 4 September, and the bill was officially withdrawn on 5 October 2019.

Widespread protests, including those on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, were accompanied by violent clashes with the police, who fired rubber bullets and tear gas injuring several persons. The protesters stormed the Legislative Council and destroyed urban infrastructure. Thousands of people were arrested, and many activists were charged with rioting. The Hong Kong government banned face coverings on 5 October 2019. In November, police surrounded Hong Kong Polytechnic University campus after students and activists barricaded themselves inside. Even though the bill was officially withdrawn, the protests continued, demanding implementation of the other four demands, using the motto: "Five demands, not one less."

The 2019 Hong Kong District Council elections were held on 24 November 2019. There was a record turnout of over 71.2% of registered voters (GovHK, 2019). Over 81.3% of all seats fell to the pro-democracy camp, which took control of 17 out of 18 district councils. It should be mentioned that previously 72.8% of the seats belonged to the pro-Beijing party. Therefore, it reduced the number of its representatives to almost a quarter since the previous elections (Lam et al., 2019). On 23 January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Hong Kong, and one of the consequences of the pandemic was the termination of large-scale protests. The movement entered a period of enforced abeyance.

According to research led by Francis L. F. Lee, Gary Tang, Samson Yuen and Edmund W. Cheng (Lee et al., 2019; Yuen, 2019; Chung, 2020), who interviewed over 13,000 protesters in surveys conducted from September 2019 to January 2020, the vast majority of respondents participated in peaceful forms of protests, and only 3–13% of demonstrators (numbers vary from month to month) had been actively involved in frontline protests, such as "stop police advances," and 35–52% of demonstrators had been passing on resources to the front line. Although the types of participation changed in different months, most participants had been involved in online actions, such as sharing pro-movement messages and information (75–84%), expressing pro-movement opinions online (67–79%) or signing online petitions (79–90%). Community activism was also quite common, including singing "Glory to Hong Kong" in public (77–86%), expressing opinions on over 150 so-called Lennon Walls (57–69%), joining a "human chain" delivering helmets, umbrellas, masks and goggles to protesters on the front lines (58–65%) or shouting protest slogans from windows at home (47–56%). At least four in ten people had been involved in resource or money donation to protest-related groups. Some people had participated in economic resistance, such as supporting pro-movement businesses (68–99%), boycotting pro-government businesses (83–99%) and participating in any form of strike (53–58%). The results of this study are strikingly different from the picture that emerges from *the People's Daily*, which was much more focused on violent actions.

The media's role in shaping a positive image of China

Li Changchun, the former Chairman of the Communist Party of China's (CPC's) Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilization, describing the reform of major news and media agencies, said that "their role as the Party's and people's 'mouthpiece' must remain unchanged; the Party should always have control over media, cadres and the appropriate orientation of public opinion" (Shan, 2014, p. 199). The role of the Chinese media does not end with influencing the opinion of Chinese society but goes beyond the country's borders. The necessity to present to foreigners a proper, "true" image of China can be illustrated by the statement of the Chinese politician Zhu Muzhi, who was working at Xinhua News Agency for many years, serving also as Xinhua's president. In 1991, as director of the State Council Information Office, Zhu said that some foreign countries "have prejudices or have wrongly believed rumours; therefore, what they think about China is not the true image of China," and that is why Chinese journalists should "present a comprehensive and real picture of China to the outside world so that you can see the true image of China" (Parker, 1991).

In recent decades, China has been trying to influence how it is perceived internationally. China is trying to shape a positive image of a peace-loving country with rich culture and economic strength, benefitting the world. International media experts and foreign public relations firms work to improve the country's image abroad (Wang, 2003, pp. 48–49). In addition, various media platforms build China's international image: English-language TV channels, multilingual China Radio International, publications, newspapers and magazines and internet resources. Whether these efforts are working as expected is doubtful (Jura and Kałużyńska, 2013; Wang, 2003). The reasons can be multiple: for instance, being misunderstood by foreign recipients and the mismatch of the message being communicated (Zemanek, 2013, pp. 104–105) or simply the domination of the world discourse by the Western media (Mattis, 2012).

In this chapter, *the People's Daily* was chosen as a source of articles for analysis as it is an official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and is controlled by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee, the top decision-making organ in China. Although top leaders no longer write commentaries for the newspaper, as Mao Zedong used to do, the newspaper's editorials, comments and articles offer an insight into the viewpoints of the CPC leaders (Wu, 1994, p. 195). The newspaper's website proudly informs one about President Hu Jintao's inspection tour of its editorial office in 2008. During this visit, the president praised the newspaper: "People.cn has played a unique role in advocating the Party's belief, guiding public opinion and warmly serving netizens since inception." The website has been awarded the statuses of "most influential news website," "most respected central website in China," "most valuable new media" and "most professional news website in China's wireless Internet" (People's Daily Online, 2021). *The People's Daily* carries out its mission as part of

the traditional communist "transmission belt" role from the party to the people. In addition, *the People's Daily* presents itself to the outside as a "world-class newspaper commensurate with China's global stature" and not only as a "national English language newspaper" (Lye, 2010, pp. 554–555). This self-presentation indicates the desire to influence not only English-speaking readers in the country but also foreigners and the Chinese diaspora abroad. The importance of the newspaper for party leaders as an important medium for presenting China's image abroad was why *the People's Daily* was selected for this analysis.

Procedure

By using search engines, a database containing 1,574 articles from *the People's Daily* on topics related to Hong Kong was created. These articles were published in the newspaper's online version between January 2019 and March 2020. Among these articles, 743 (47.2%) touched upon the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement to various degrees. From July to December 2019, the number of articles about Hong Kong was noticeably higher than that in the previous period and at the time of declining large-scale protests in early 2020. In the same period, the percentage of articles relating to the protests stayed above 60% of the overall number of Hong Kong-related articles, with the highest rate of 81% in August (Figure 14.1). Only the articles related to the protests were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The remaining articles related primarily to the economic dimension of cooperation between continental China and Hong Kong,

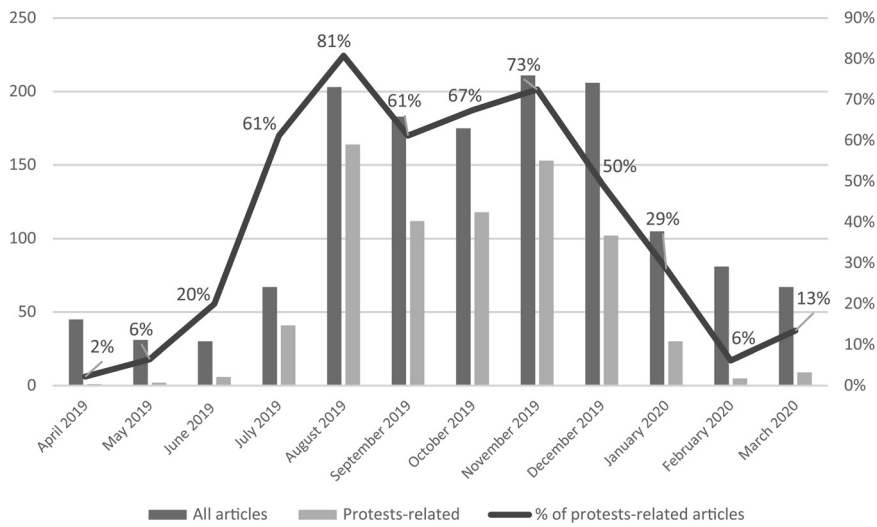

Figure 14.1 Percentage of articles about protests against all articles about Hong Kong each month, from March 2019 until March 2020

especially within the Greater Bay Area, and social and economic reforms introduced by the Hong Kong government; some of them concerned incidents, sports or Hong Kong appearing in the context of Macao affairs.

The categorisation procedure and analysis began with creating a dictionary of categories and codes. A manual analysis of 10% of randomly selected articles produced general categories of codes (sub-dictionaries). These categories were as follows: the protests' negative image; the protests' neutral image; Hong Kong residents opposing the protests/supporting the police; the protests' negative influence; the positive image of Hong Kong–PRC relations; foreign interference; the negative image of foreign attitudes towards the protests; the positive image of foreign attitudes towards protests; symbols; and, finally, emotions. To get the complete picture, some additional categories were added to the analysis (such as the protests' positive image; Hong Kong residents supporting protests; the protests' positive influence; the negative image of Hong Kong–PRC relations), although they did not appear in the pre-analysed sample. When analysing the articles for October, one category, "elections," was added for the upcoming elections. A total of 69 codes were created within the main categories mentioned earlier. Apart from "elections," all other categories and codes were chosen before a proper analysis was conducted and turned out to be sufficient for the analysed articles. The decision to create these specific categories of codes was motivated by the appearance of particular terms in a pilot survey of 75 randomly selected articles and by the author's research interests.

The protest-related articles were manually coded by applying the above categorisation model. Codes were assigned to individual paragraphs in articles. If more than one of the analysed issues was addressed in the same paragraph, that paragraph was assigned as many codes as necessary. Typically, more than one code was assigned to one paragraph. A single article was assigned between a few and a maximum of 67 codes, with an average of 14 codes per article. As a result, a total of 10,698 codes were created.

A part of the analysis examined the frequency of occurrence of some other keywords (such as the ways of naming the protest participants, main activists and the protests themselves). Finally, a qualitative analysis of the coded content was carried out.

The general frequency of main code categories and the frequency of articles in which these categories appeared are presented in Table 14.1. The prevalence of negatively associated categories is evident, both when describing the protests and their long-term impact on Hong Kong and in foreign reactions from mainly Western countries. On the other hand, the image of the Hong Kong–PRC relationship is positive. No texts appraised the protests positively, describing support for them from ordinary city residents. The lack of information about any negative influence of China on Hong Kong is also to be noted.

The code frequency in the analysed database delineates a general picture of the protests in the Chinese newspaper (Table 14.2). It is visible that the image of protests appears most often as violent and radical. The words "violent" and

Table 14.1 General frequency of categories. The following codes did not appear in the entire database of articles: protests' positive image; negative image of HK–PRC relations; Hong Kong residents supporting protests

Category	*Count*	*% Codes*	*Articles*	*% Articles*
Protests' negative image	4,437	41.5	548	73.8
Positive image of HK–PRC relations	1,279	12.0	354	47.6
Foreign interference	1,226	11.5	245	33.0
Negative image of foreign countries/foreigners	1,157	10.8	283	38.1
Protests' negative influence	1,145	10.7	282	38.0
HK residents against protests	687	6.4	199	26.8
Positive image of foreign countries/ foreigners	469	4.4	73	9.8
Symbols	167	1.6	83	11.2
Election	61	0.6	25	3.4
Emotions	41	0.4	30	4.0
Protests' neutral image	29	0.3	19	2.6

Table 14.2 Frequency of occurrence of codes that accounted for at least 2% of all codes

Category	*Code*	*Count*	*% Codes*	*Articles*	*% Articles*
Protests' negative image	Violence, radicalism	1,697	15.9	479	64.5
Foreign interference	By the US	984	9.2	183	24.6
Protests' negative influence	On economy	559	5.2	171	23.0
Protests' negative image	Vandalism	538	5.0	236	31.8
Positive image of HK–PRC relations	One country, two systems	431	4.0	224	30.1
Negative image of foreign countries/ foreigners	China's internal affairs	373	3.5	178	24.0
Protests' negative image	Attacking the police	371	3.5	170	22.9
HK residents against protests	HK residents condemning protests	345	3.2	118	15.9
Protests' negative image	Weapons, bombs	326	3.0	137	18.4
Positive image of foreign countries/ foreigners	Foreign experts support for China	297	2.8	51	6.9
Protests' negative image	Positive about police action	261	2.4	122	16.4
Protests' negative image	People injured	238	2.2	106	14.3

"violence" were used in 66.9% of all analysed articles (in addition, their synonyms, such as "vicious," "brutal/brutality," "aggressive/aggression" and "cruel/cruelty," appeared several or a dozen times). Words containing the root "radical" appeared in 27.5% of the articles. The protests' negative impact on Hong Kong's economy is often emphasised, as well as vandalism, the destruction of city infrastructure and attacks on police officers. With time, more reports emerged about protesters' possession and use of weapons. Codes related to US attempts to influence Hong Kong's or China's internal affairs and attempts to undermine the "one country, two systems" principle are frequent.

Other codes that appeared in 1–2% of all codes, in order of frequency, namely biased foreign media/foreigners; Chinese patriotism; the illegality of protests; the double standard of foreigners; masked, black-clad protesters; foreign influence on protests; arrests; the negative influence on tourism; the negative influence on society/social stability; HK residents support the police; the negative influence on safety; Chinese symbols; HK government praised for dialogue; foreign political leaders' support for China; foreign Anti-Chinese feeling; the positive influence of PRC on HK's economy; crime; China's sovereignty; and, finally, general comments about foreign interference.

It was also interesting to explore how *the People's Daily* articles referred to the protesters. The term "rioters" came first (696 times in 32.4% of articles), followed by "protesters" (582 times in 27.7% of articles) and "radicals" (169 times in 13.1%). The neutral term "protesters" in 42.7% of appearances was accompanied by attributes such as "radical," "violent," "masked" and "black-clad." The protests themselves were also labelled differently. The neutral word "protest" occurred in 24.9% of articles (379 times), and "assembly" was found in 10.2%. However, every third case of "protest" and two-thirds of "assembly" were accompanied by a negative specifier, namely "violent," "unlawful," "illegal," "unauthorized," "disruptive" and "radical."

Qualitative analysis of the image of protests in *the People's Daily*

The next step of the analysis focused on the content of the particular codes and articles. The codes were used to select content for qualitative research. The aim was to show the image of Hong Kong 2019–2020 protests that *the People's Daily* readers could have after reading only this source of information. Examples of expressions from the analysed database will be presented, making the image of the protests more specific.

The People's Daily was not interested in describing the many peaceful demonstrations in Hong Kong. Only a few articles concerned legal marches, and the demands put forward by protesters were notably omitted. For instance, the phrase "five demands" was mentioned only once in the database. The newspaper mentioned, however, that despite the withdrawal of the controversial bill, protesters continued to demonstrate, refused to enter into dialogue with the authorities and

made unrealistic demands, implying that they had ulterior motives. The newspaper called for a distinction between peaceful demonstrations and acts of vandalism. Nevertheless, the former demonstrations were also described as illegal, as they were unauthorised and had paralysed traffic, "seriously affecting emergency services and people's daily living" ("HKSAR gov't severely condemns illegal, violent acts of radical protesters," 1 September 2019). The newspaper explained that "the demonstrations that began months ago in Hong Kong after the SAR government introduced the now-scrapped extradition bill have gone far beyond the point of peaceful demonstrations. So far, that it is now pointless to describe them as such" ("Op-Ed: What a shame for US to interfere in HK affairs in the disguise of democracy," 09 November 2019). The Lennon Walls were described as sites of violence where people engaged in physical confrontations. Additionally, due to the necessity to devote time and manpower to the protests, the police were unable to prevent crime, which had resulted in increased violence in the city. Residents were now faced with crime every day, and Hong Kong had become a dangerous place.

The presentation of the negative course of the protests was included in 73.8% of all analysed articles, with it being the most frequently repeated theme. As many as two-thirds of the articles touched on the topic of violent actions caused by "rioters" and "masked, black-clad extremists," who, despite being few, undermine the rule of law and bring chaos and vandalism to the city. Sometimes, the articles included more colourful descriptions of demonstrators, such as "self-proclaimed freedom fighters," "young people and students, who have joined radicals in wrongdoings such as smashing public property," a "proactive violent destructive group of individuals" and "a small number of radicals committing misdeeds." The newspaper also reiterated that "the small group of anti-China disruptors in Hong Kong has betrayed the country, sold off the interests of Hong Kong while begging for intervention from external forces." Moreover, "their treasonable and disruptive acts will be rejected by all patriots who love China and Hong Kong, and be condemned to everlasting infamy" ("China condemns US congressional committees' approval of the bill on Hong Kong: spokesperson," 26 September 2019). Protest participants were sometimes discredited as young and inexperienced, lacking an understanding of Hong Kong's true situation and glorifying colonisation, people who "have been guided down a dangerous path" and were being "used as cannon fodder by external forces."

Every third article contained descriptions of acts of vandalism: "The violent protesters have broken many law items, including criminal damage, arson, unlawful assemblies, riot, obstructing police officers' execution of duties, assaulting police officers, fighting in a public place, with some serious violations carrying life imprisonment" ("Legal professionals of Hong Kong deplore damage of legal system by illegal gatherings, violence," 29 July 2019). The acts of vandalism were listed in detail, namely storming government buildings, vandalising metro stations, setting up roadblocks, destroying road signs, sidewalks, lanterns and fences, damaging vehicles, defacing properties and leaving insulting graffiti. However, the articles did not specify the contents of this graffiti or illegally placed posters.

There were also descriptions of anti-China acts, such as attacks on the PRC's national symbols, especially the burning or otherwise desecration of the Chinese flag and defacing of the national emblem. As such, the demonstrators "blatantly challenged national sovereignty and touched the bottom line of the principle of "one country, two system" ("HKSAR chief executive condemns violent acts, calls for upholding rule of law," 23 July 2019). These "anti-China extremists" attacked Chinese journalists, assaulted people who just speak Mandarin Chinese, vandalised the office building of Xinhua News Agency's local bureau and tried to destroy "the business premises of Chinese enterprises, smashing their gates, trashing facilities before robbing and setting fire" ("Hong Kong groups condemn violence committed by rioters," 6 October 2019).

The newspaper moreover points out violent attacks on innocent Hong Kong citizens, "lynching those who disagree with them, or merely uttered different political views" ("Opinion: Black terror: The real threat to freedom in Hong Kong," 8 October 2019). Although the articles listed the number of causalities, especially police officers, they did not mention the victims of police brutality.

The escalating violence was described in many articles; they were focused on the possession and use of various types of weapons from umbrellas and sharpened iron poles to petrol bombs and "explosive device used by terrorists all around the world." The violence was labelled as showing "some signs of terrorism," "terrorist and criminal activities under the cover of freedom and democracy" and "black terror."

The People's Daily places the Hong Kong police and the silent majority of citizens in opposition to the protesters. Descriptions of violent attacks against the police were frequent, appearing in 22.9% of the articles. After the personal data of many police officers and their families were illegally disclosed online, there were incidents of bullying against children of the police. Chinese journalists, however, reported that the actions of the police were moderate, adequate to the threat and for the benefit of law-abiding residents. They cited the opinions of foreigners, presented as experts, who were surprised by the gentleness of the Hong Kong police, and justified their actions, for instance, a Canadian vlogger described "brutal protesters and restrained police" ("Opinion: Black terror: The real threat to freedom in Hong Kong," 8 October 2019); the chairman of the Kuhn Foundation of the United States said that "Hong Kong police have generally exercised restraint over the past few months, while some extreme demonstrators have repeatedly attempted to provoke the police" ("US double standards reveal deep-seated hegemony," 3 December 2019) and an Indian journalist and researcher denounced the provocations on local police ("Experts urge stop of violence in Hong Kong, denounce external forces," 23 August 2019), just to mention a few examples.

The People's Daily reported demonstrations by Hong Kong citizens who firmly rejected violence, wished the city to remain stable and prosperous and demonstrated patriotism towards the Chinese motherland. One such expression of patriotism was a peace rally against violence involving hundreds of taxis hanging

Chinese national flags. Gatherings aimed at showing support for the police also attracted the attention of Chinese journalists.

In general, analysing the articles reveals the image of "once a peaceful and prosperous place in south China" ("Opinion Black terror The real threat to freedom in Hong Kong," 8 October 2019) being terrorised by an aggressive minority. According to the newspaper, most citizens were against the protests, expected a return to normality and supported the police. The narrative of the "silent majority" is illustrated by this quote:

> Many people in Hong Kong have been forced into silence. People are beaten by gangs for voicing their opinions; children are pressured into conformity by radical students and teachers at school to attend illegal demonstrations; sons and daughters of police officers are bullied with their personal information being posted online.
>
> ("Opinion: Black terror: The real threat to freedom in Hong Kong," 8 October 2019)

Moreover, some volunteers, called "scar removers," scraped off provocative slogans and cleaned up the streets. In one of the relatively few emotionally marked descriptions in the database, these actions were described as follows: "by removing those 'scars' of Hong Kong, we are also healing the wounds violence inflicted on people's hearts" ("Feature: Remove 'scars' of Hong Kong to heal wounds of violence," 4 September 2019).

In almost every fourth article, journalists reported the consequences of prolonged protests, especially economic consequences. Chaos in the city and the airport stand-off in August caused inbound tourism to the city to decrease. Apart from tourism, the crisis also affected other industries, such as retail, catering and transport. The protests that lasted for many months hurt social security and stability. Damaged infrastructure facilities and blocked roads influenced residents' quality of life and safety. Divisions and conflicts arose in the society of Hong Kong. The rule of law was also described as having been weakened. All these factors were reported to have had a severe, negative impact on the global image of Hong Kong as a safe place and an international financial, commercial, trade and aviation hub. The negative impact of the protests would be visible in the long term, according to journalists from *the People's Daily*. That is why the newspaper stressed the importance of "stopping violence from stealing the future of Hong Kong" for the sake of future generations ("Commentary: violence kidnapping HK's future should not be tolerated," 31 August 2019).

However, the voices expressed in the newspaper also assumed that thanks to cooperation with mainland China, the economic crisis was not that serious, and Hong Kong could make remarkable progress along with the development of the whole country. The articles on the Hong Kong protests were also a pretext to describe the benefits that the SAR derived from its "unique advantages under 'one

country, two systems' principle" and that it "is backed by the motherland and open to the world" ("Hong Kong celebrates 22nd anniversary of return to motherland with various activities," 2 July 2019). The newspaper argues that Hong Kong's future will be secured thanks to the opportunities brought by the development of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Finally, the theme of foreign interference in Hong Kong and China's internal affairs (used in the newspaper interchangeably) should also be mentioned. *The People's Daily* suggested that foreign politicians who disregarded facts and basic norms governing international relations came mainly from the United States, United Kingdom and the West in general. According to the articles, their goal was to undermine the "one country, two systems" model and destabilise Hong Kong. The Americans were accused of hegemony and "Cold War mentality," and the British of colonial thinking and sentiments to the glorified colonial period. The frequency of articles about American interference increased with discussions in the US Congress on introducing the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, which was eventually signed into law on 27 November 2019.

Texts that criticised foreign attempts at meddling with Hong Kong affairs repeatedly stated that "people of Hong Kong are enjoying unprecedented democracy, rights and freedom under the law" ("Commissioner's office of China's foreign ministry in Hong Kong condemns US senator's remarks on Hong Kong," 26 July 2019). It was emphasised that Hong Kong ranked high among the freest places in the world according to various international freedom indexes. It was also an occasion for journalists to remind readers that under British colonial rule, Hong Kong had had no democracy, with the people of Hong Kong not even having had the right to take to the streets to protest.

The People's Daily argued that despite all the benefits Hong Kong had gained after 1997, some US politicians had an evil intention to harm Hong Kong's interests and contain China's development, which they considered a threat to the West. These "anti-China elements" and some Western media were biased and hypocritical, labelling violence in Hong Kong as expressions of human rights and freedom. The "black hands" were using naive Hong Kong young people, had incited separatist actions and were trying to carry out another "colour revolution." However, all these actions were doomed to failure, as Hongkongers are patriotic, and "China has made it very clear that reunification is inevitable, and it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the will of the Chinese government and people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity" ("Op-Ed: The miscalculation of Tsai Ing-wen's 'US show'"16 July 2019).

Conclusion

Although the research was limited to analysing articles from one media outlet only, given that the *the People's Daily* offers an understanding of the Chinese

leaders' viewpoints, this chapter's findings are still of interest. The Chinese newspaper analysed here tried to show that the protesters constituted a small percentage of Hong Kong residents, young and susceptible to manipulation, whose actions do not have the support of the silent majority of Hongkongers, especially as they were a serious threat to security, social stability and, above all, to the economy and international image of the city. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, during November's District Council elections, most citizens supported the pro-democracy camp, which proved that the silent majority had been a myth. It is no wonder therefore that *the People's Daily* did not pay too much attention to the election results in Hong Kong.

During the protests, various graphic images were created, used directly during the protests and placed on the Lennon Walls and other walls in the city or online, of which Jasmine Ong counted 5,700. Their themes were related to social mobilisation, unity, identity and criticism of police brutality (Ong, 2020, p. 287). Observing Hong Kong protests on-site, the author also noticed that protests were directed not only against the Hong Kong government but also against the Chinese themselves, whose increasing presence has been visible in the city since the former British colony returned to China in 1997. The protesters used various anti-Chinese symbols, such as posters with modified versions of the Chinese flag displaying a Nazi swastika symbol and "anti-Chinazi" caption, a black Bauhinia flag with wilted petals, posters with insulting images of the PRC president, showing him as a dictator, and banners calling for the freedom of Hong Kong. Protesters waved the British colonial flags of Hong Kong, as well as the US and Taiwan flags in thanks for their support. They were also holding Tibetan flags to compare their situation to that of Tibet and also referred to the situation in Xinjiang. Posters reminding viewers of human rights problems in the PRC and showing solidarity with Chinese Christians, Muslims and minorities, as well as openly and harshly criticising the CPC, were put up on the city's walls. However, no mention at all was made of such symbols in the analysed articles. Anti-Chinese acts were reduced to attacks on the Chinese national flag or on Chinese citizens, with which any Chinese citizen could sympathise. Perhaps, such omission was due to the fear that showing the aforementioned openly anti-government symbols could inspire some citizens of the PRC to protest against their own government.

The author realises that this analysis of Hong Kong's 2019–2020 protests is a narrow insight into the issue of building the desired images of China and its SAR for both internal and foreign audiences. However, as this issue has not been fully described as yet, the research will subsequently be extended by analysing visual materials used to illustrate articles concerning the protests.

Note

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